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Standard

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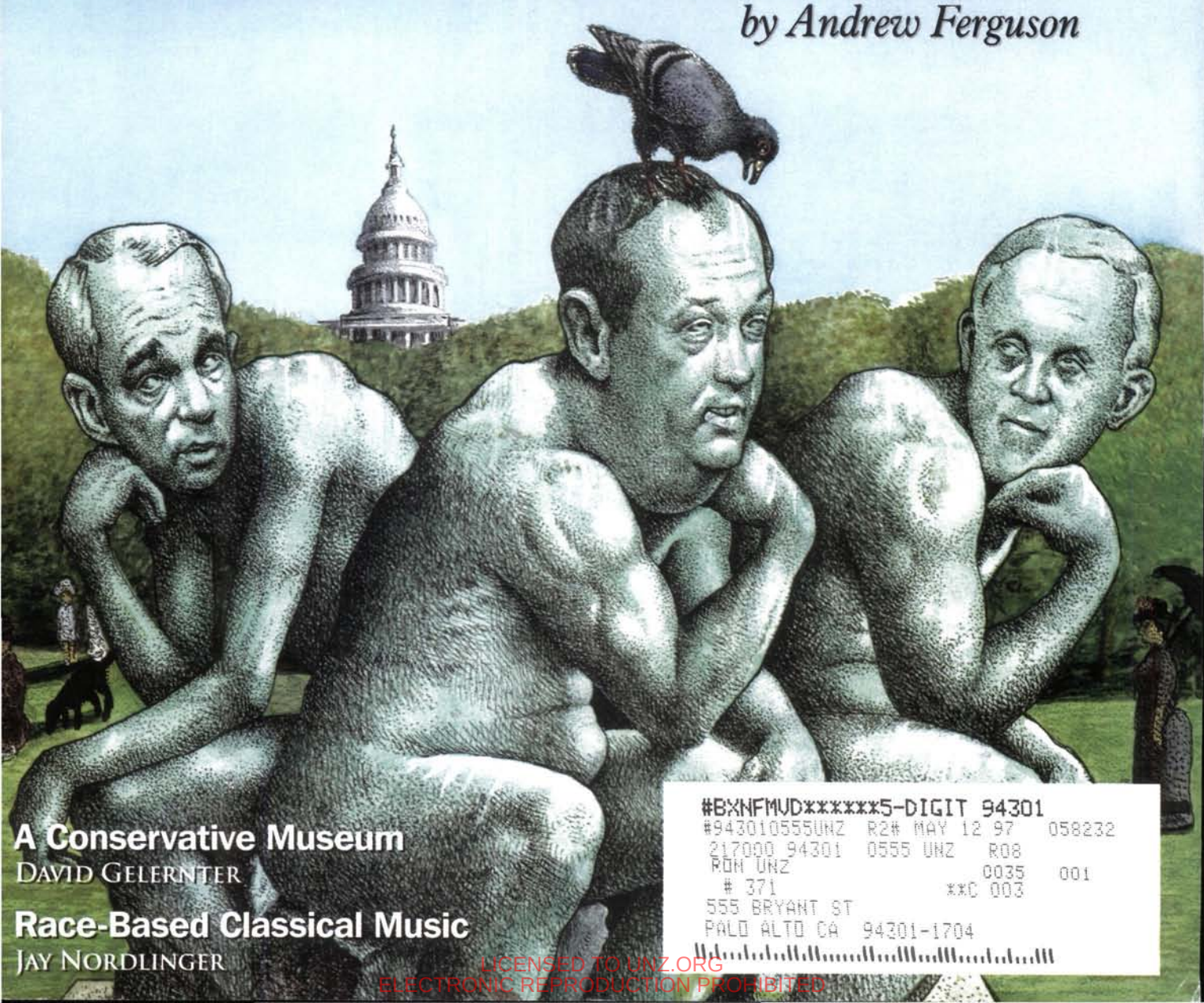
EXTREMELY DEEP THINKERS

or, The Loneliness of the Long-Suffering Senator

by Andrew Ferguson



A Conservative Museum
DAVID GELERNTER

Race-Based Classical Music
JAY NORDLINGER

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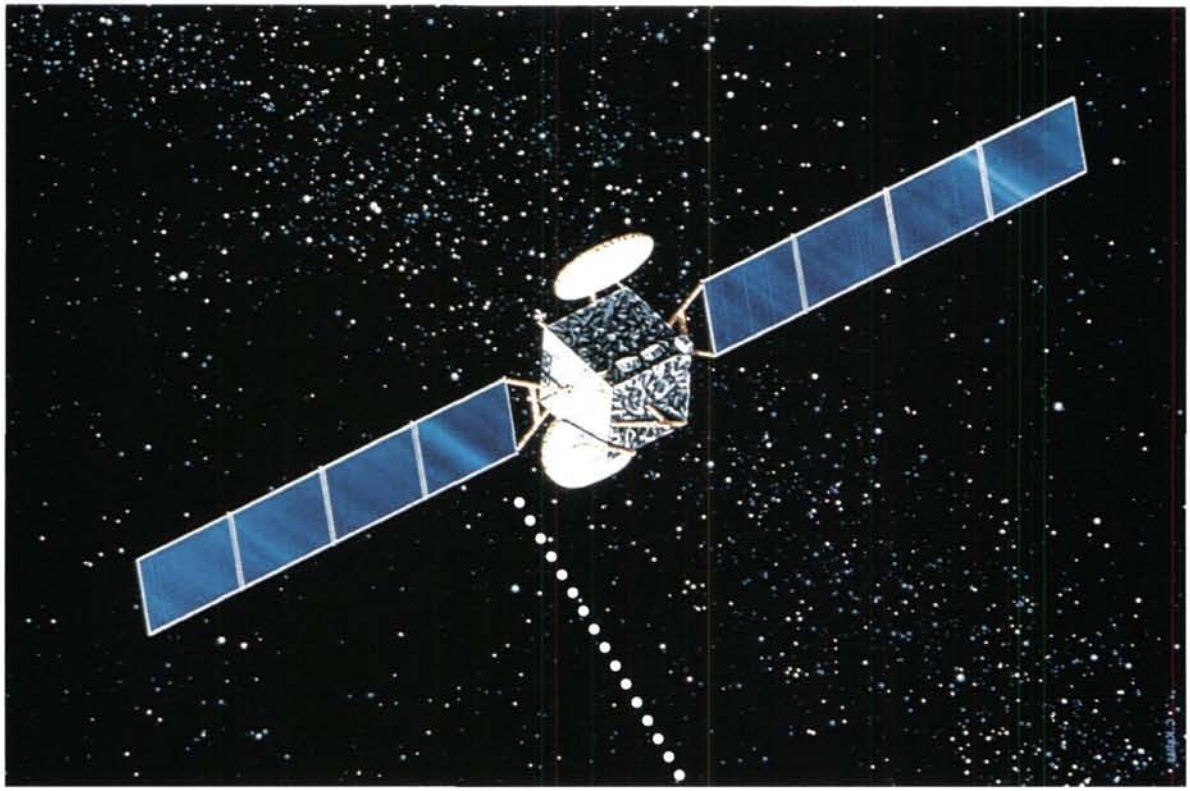
food for thought



Space-age technology helps farmers make down-to-earth decisions.

If you can't imagine farmers using satellite technology, you're probably not alone. But that's farming in the '90s, precision farming, and it has planted the seed for a whole new era in farm management.

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So while this new farming technology might seem a little far-out, the results can be felt very close to home.

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 35 • MAY 20, 1996

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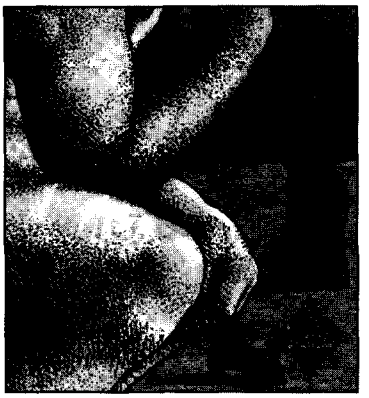

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A Well-Oiled Amendment

Roscoe Bartlett has a plan to close the gender gap. Bartlett, a second-term Republican representative from Maryland, has offered an amendment to the National Security Authorization bill that would ban the sale of nudie magazines like *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler* on military bases.

According to Bartlett, such publications aren't simply bad for the morals of enlisted men. They "can also compromise our defense readiness" by inciting misbehavior like Tailhook and outrages like the recent rape of a schoolgirl on Okinawa. As Bartlett's press secretary Lisa Wright puts it, the military is a "well-oiled machine"; pornography gums up the gears. Or something like that.

What does all this have to do with getting Bob Dole elected president? Everything, says Bartlett; taking smut out of the PX is a women's issue.

"We think that there is no better way to close the gender gap," he says proudly. "I think that there is no way you could look at *Hustler* magazine and conclude it is not demeaning to women." Bartlett should know. He recently "thumbed through" a copy of *Hustler* and made an amazing discovery: According to his personal research, "Three-fourths of all the positions depicted in it are lesbian. And of the fourth that are heterosexual, at least half of those are oral." Dole might want to keep those statistics handy for his acceptance speech at the convention in San Diego.

On the other hand, is ridding military bases of soft-core porn really apt to get women excited about the Dole campaign? An informal survey taken by Scrapbook staff indicates not. What, then, can be done about the gender gap? For the answer, we turn to you. Send your suggestions to Let's Close That Gap!, c/o The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, NW, Suite 505, Washington DC 20036. The winner gets to be the new Mary Matalin.

Al Franken Is a Big Fat Baby

Comedian Al Franken, author of the bestselling *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot*, made a "joke" about Newt Gingrich, his daughter, and menstruation at the White House Correspondents' Dinner on May 4. The dinner, attended by 2,800 scribblers, politicians, and assorted celebrity hangers-on, was a Clinton love-in; Franken, who had been hard on the president in a previous appearance two years ago, practically blew him kisses this time, as did many in the audience.

The Franken joke was easily as tasteless as the now-infamous Don Imus slap at Clinton at a dinner in March. The first person to arrive at Gingrich's table with apologies was Vice President Gore. Soon after, Gingrich encountered Franken and told him that, were Gingrich not a public figure, he'd have punched the comic out.

Courtney Sale Ross, the widow of TimeWarner mogul Steve Ross and not known for being a conservative, was as incensed as Gingrich. She confronted Franken at a Washington brunch the next day and told him he'd gone over the line in his remarks. In response, Franken got mad, which led Ross to ask why the comedian was so filled with anger. He said he wasn't. Maybe not, but he couldn't take the criticism. Time for a new book: *Al Franken Is a Big Fat Baby*.

We Don't Need No Stinkin' Tax Cut

Meanwhile, back at the Dole campaign, Dole's success in using the gas tax as an issue against Bill Clinton has prompted his advisers to consider something bolder in the tax area—maybe a Reagan-style, across-the-board reduction in income tax rates, 15 percent over three years. But a 90-minute private meeting on taxes between Dole, some Senate colleagues, and six conservative economists on May 8

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Scrapbook

Maximum Hypocrisy

"Raising the minimum wage," Bill Clinton said last week, "is very important to a lot of us, and more importantly, it's very important to millions and millions of working Americans." He also described the Team Act—a Dole measure that would allow employers to bargain with their employees independent of the union shop steward—as a "poison pill . . . that will undermine workers' rights." But only a few years ago Gov. Bill Clinton was selling his state as a pro-business paradise with workers just ripe for exploitation.

The governor was aggressive in promoting Arkansas's status as a non-union, "right to work" state. The governor's office even sent glossy brochures with Clinton's picture on the front boasting of Arkansas's low worker wages and right-to-work laws: "An amendment to our state's constitution guarantees that Arkansas is a right to work state. . . . Arkansas ranks among the five lowest states in the nation on average hourly earnings of manufacturing workers." Governor Clinton, meet President Clinton.

proved a bust, even though it included such bright lights as Chicago's Gary Becker and Harvard's Robert Barro. Most of those in attendance leaned away from tax cuts and toward deficit cuts. No surprise here, considering that two of the most vocal participants were Sen. Pete Domenici and Martin Feldstein, both of whom are supply-side skeptics. Newt Gingrich came by for 20 minutes to push an aggressive tax-cutting strategy, but the dominant voice still belonged to the deficit hawks. Dole mostly stayed mum, but his long-standing discomfort with tax-cutting was revealed in a private meeting with a top Republican who proposed a payroll-tax rebate. Dole complained such a rebate would be difficult to pay for. No kidding. So will making up a 20-point deficit in the polls.

The Reading List

In honor of our cover on Extremely Deep Thinkers, we would like to recommend one novel this week, a great book on how Extremely Deep Thinking can get you crosswise of nature itself. That book is ***Bouvard and Pécuchet***, the last (and uncompleted) novel by Gustave Flaubert, the author of *Madame Bovary*. One of the comic masterpieces of the 19th century, this tale of two fools who try to teach themselves how to farm by reading books has a purity and simplicity of vision that belies the almost heroic labors its author went to in its service: The novel mentions over a thousand books, every one of which Flaubert himself read as research.

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Casual

Oh Say, Can You Cease?

I arrived at the Orioles-Twins game a few Sundays ago just in time for the singing of the "Star-Spangled Banner." A young grungeball named Edwin McCain, with hair all the way down his back, was standing in front of home plate, groaning as if drunk, "Orra ramparts we warrrrrshed . . ." Apparently that was his style: singing only on the consonants. When he got to the end he held the word "free" until he ran out of breath. Usually the expression is "held the note," but in fact Edwin didn't hold the note. He didn't even keep it in his general vicinity. It surprised me a bit to hear that he's a young folk-rocker whose records are selling like hotcakes. He stank.

But then the national anthem almost invariably stinks. Hearing it at a ballgame used to mean a lot to me. Now it turns my stomach. In fact, it may currently be the most painful thing about attending a sport that gravitates almost instinctively to innovations that cheapen it, from rock music between innings to monster TV screens in center field to cheering instructions ("*Noise!!!*").

The "Star-Spangled Banner" first became a ballgame staple during the 1942 season, as a gesture of solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of young men—including the vast majority of major league baseball players—who suddenly found themselves fighting fascism an ocean away. It was a queer American custom that foreigners found incomprehensible, even risible, and like many such customs, it was one of the things that distinguished us as a reverent, civilized, and superior people. Americans knew it, and that's why the custom continued after World War II. The anthem was played by either a band or an organist, and everyone—meaning *everyone*—sang.

The anthem became an occasion for political protest in 1968, of course, when Tommie Smith and John Wesley Carlos raised their fists in a Black Power salute at the Mexico City Olympics, after taking the gold and bronze in the 200-meter dash. But it wasn't until a year later, when Jimi Hendrix played an acid-rock guitar solo of the tune at Woodstock, that irony and outrage invaded the song itself. From then on, the national anthem would became a poor man's "Piss Christ," with performers competing for who could sing the longest or the weirdest or the most ironic national anthem, even changing the words. That's how it's sung at roughly half the games today. It has become impossible for the crowd to sing along, but that's no longer the point.

The anthem had enemies besides the unpatriotic. It became a plum, to be traded for political influence or sold off as a commercial spot. In the mid-1970s, North Carolina State basketball coach Norman Sloan arranged to have his wife Jo Ann sing the anthem before every game—and who was to gainsay him? At the 1986 World Series in Boston, that music-rich city ignored its local talent in favor of a now-forgotten starlet acceptable to NBC, which—what a coincidence!—was broadcasting the World Series that year. In 1995, Barbra Streisand was reportedly passed over for the Super Bowl anthem because commissioner Paul Tagliabue had promised it to Kathie Lee Gifford, wife of his bosom friend Frank. And nowadays, it seems most basketball games begin with the anthem sung by some lucky youngster, often as not the daughter of a megabucks donor (if it's a college game) or the son of some big-city political heavyweight (if it's the pros).

The two strains—the anti-American and the exploitative—came together when Roseanne Barr *grunted* the national anthem, grabbing at her crotch and spitting, on Working Woman's Night at Jack Murphy Stadium in 1990.

And together they remain. Edwin McCain's groaning and gurgling and prancing was followed by something even more revolting: an outright promo spot. "In honor of Edwin's visit," the public-address system began—causing considerable confusion among those of us who somehow thought we'd endured his performance to honor *America*—"he'll be signing autographs outside the main concourse. His new album, featuring Edwin singing favorites from Hootie and the Blowfish and John Michael Montgomery, is available at Waxie Maxie's. And look for Edwin's first release, 'Honor Among Thieves,' at record stores *everywhere*."

Last month, Denver Nuggets guard Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf was suspended for not standing during the anthem. He claimed he couldn't participate in a ceremony that honors the United States. If only that were true! As currently performed, the anthem has nothing to do with honoring the United States and everything to do with nepotism, p.c., and the commercial piggery of franchise owners and television networks. Helping some talentless neo-longhair sell records wasn't part of the deal that sports teams made with their fans and their country in 1942. As it stands, maybe the first franchise that decides to drop the anthem altogether will be doing everyone a favor.

Christopher Caldwell

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STATES RIGHTS—WHO CARES?

What a great idea! It's just what every American has longed for: Yet another federal agency soaking up taxpayer dollars to perform a function better managed at the state level.

Yet that is what's happening in Washington. The financial services debate is deadlocked in the Congress over the states' rights to regulate insurance. Currently, approximately 10,000 officials regulate insurance at the state level. Insurance regulation is—and has been for over 200 years—the responsibility of states.

Now, a power grab by a federal bureaucracy—the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC)—is threatening to stamp out state authority to regulate insurance and force the creation of another layer of bureaucracy and regulation in Washington.

Unless this states' right is protected, the day will soon come when Congress will be forced to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to oversee the $488 billion insurance industry—the largest industry exclusively regulated by the states.

It doesn't make sense in this era of returning power to the states to allow the Comptroller—an unelected regulator—to cancel state insurance regulation and force Congress to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to fill the void. The American people don't want or need another federal bureaucracy!

Congress can preserve this states' right by including a provision in a pending House financial services reform bill (H.R. 2520) that reaffirms and keeps insurance oversight power in the states' hands.

WHO CARES ABOUT STATES RIGHTS? WE DO AND SO DO CONSUMERS!

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Thatched Roofs and Dictators

Charles Krauthammer's "Under a Thatched Roof, With Warren Christopher" (May 6) was exceptional. What a feat it was for him to clearly decipher and simplify what could be one of the longest-running man-versus-man shows in history.

While I agree with nearly all of the observations made, I am still left with confusion on what the United States should do. Secretary Christopher does what he is told, although I agree that a sterner rebuff could have been made after the secretary was stood up.

Twenty-two formal visits and so much attention given to Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad in exchange for warfare and terrorism is abysmal. But I dread to think how much worse Assad's behavior might be if he were isolated and ignored. Bravo on a thoroughly enjoyable and insightful piece.

Craig Davidson
Rockville, MD

Charles Krauthammer's article regarding the shelled Fijian U.N. post in South Lebanon, while interesting and informative, did not conclude with an adequate solution to America's involvement with these "peacekeeping missions."

The only possible solution is our immediate withdrawal from the United Nations and its affiliated groups. To avoid such action is a continuing non-recognition of the basic danger of U.N. membership.

Joe Ray Blalack
Houston, TX

Destroy the IRS

Stephen Moore and Dan Pilla did a fine job in "Audit Hell" (April 29). Readers of this article need no further proof that the federal government has overstepped the authority granted to it by constitutional mandate.

Americans have always had good reason to be outraged by IRS overzealousness, but this latest government scheme should have every law-abiding taxpayer flooding his representatives with calls and letters.

I agree with the authors that the system should be uprooted. A national sales tax should be instituted and most of the 100,000-plus workers of the IRS thrown out into the street and forced to look for real jobs like the rest of us.

After all, what better justice could there be for those dedicated to the proposition that American taxpayers are a bunch of suckers just begging to be abused, than to force them to get a job that might actually produce something of value?

Scott A. Barnes
Menominee, MI

Special Rights for SIDs

I read with great relief David Brooks's article about the troubles of the status-income disequilibriumed ("The Tragedy of SID: Status-Income Disequilibrium," May 6). Many of us have long understood the pain and shame that accompanies this troubling condition—and your publication deserves to be commended for shedding light on this affliction.

However, we cannot rely upon the federal government to solve all of our problems. Rather, this condition should be resolved at least partially through effective public-private partnerships. Indeed, the federal government should provide incentives to ensure that companies that act responsibly to alleviate SIDs are properly rewarded.

I write from experience. I deal with a SID-afflicted spouse on an almost daily basis. My husband and I understand that his problem can be alleviated through my diligent participation and potential partnership in a large K Street law firm.

My proposal is that we provide employers of people like me—those who have endeavored to improve the lives of SID victims—with incentives to do more.

As a start, we could develop tax havens for firms willing to place SID spouses on accelerated partnership tracks. Employers and the federal government working hand in hand can help cure SID forever.

Allison R. Hayward
Arlington, VA

Abortion and the States

Your editorial "On Partial-Birth Abortion" (April 29) criticized President Clinton's veto of the congressional ban on partial-birth abortions and argued that the ban was "plainly constitutional."

It may have been constitutional under the terms of *Roe* v. *Wade*, but it was not constitutional under the terms of the Tenth Amendment.

I believe that abortion is the killing of a human being. Congress, however, has no jurisdiction to make homicide a crime, except in the District of Columbia, in the territories, on federal property, or when the victim is a federal official.

Since the Tenth Amendment became law in 1791, regulation of the medical profession in this country has been a power reserved to the states. There has been no constitutional amendment since 1791 granting that power to Congress. Those who wish to have partial-birth abortions banned should do so at the state level.

Conservatives must be careful not to sacrifice one important principle (states' rights) in order to secure another (right to life), when securing both is fairly easy. President Clinton's veto was correct, although for the wrong reason. Conservatives can circumvent his veto by seeking redress in the state legislatures.

William T. Barrante
Watertown, CT

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Correspondence

Bravo for your editorial condemnation of President Clinton's veto of the partial-birth abortion ban.

Clinton's heinous act served only a political purpose. As captives of their "pro-choice" constituents, Clinton and the Democratic party are not simply pro-choice—they are pro-abortion. To them, no restriction is acceptable for age, parental consent, informed consent, or use of tax funds.

Now we learn Democrats won't even restrict the abortion of a half-born baby. I would challenge any pro-choice Democrat to identify even one circumstance where he would restrict abortion. Sadly, there is none.

RICHARD A. SCHAPPERT
HOUSTON, TX

PREENING WITH MEANING

Matt Labash's mean-spirited, insulting, and inaccurate story on our national Summit on Ethics and Meaning ("The Politics of Preening," May 6) is a perfect example of why so many Americans trust the media little more than they do politicians.

The problems begin with his description of the politics of meaning as "POM (as it's called by progressive hipsters)." I've been here from the beginning and have never heard anyone pronounce it "POM." He then effeminizes Reconstructionist Jews and Unitarian Universalists because they have dared to search for a post-patriarchal conception of God. And finally Labash attempts to turn the Summit into a cult of personality. It is clear that he felt overwhelmed—and thus scared to death—by the significance of the Summit and the philosophy that spawned it.

I don't blame him. If the Summit revealed anything, it was that when people are offered an alternative to outdated Republican or Democratic policies, the despair and cynicism towards politics that pundits like Labash feed off of quickly dissipates.

It is replaced by an optimism spurred by finally finding a discourse that addresses people's concern about values and family issues without demonizing minorities.

When Labash actually raises a legitimate issue—the problem of identity politics at the Summit—it becomes even more clear that he never bothered to read our literature or interview any of the major speakers. If he had, he would have realized that one of the central components of "POM" is its critique of the Left precisely because its preoccupation with identity politics precludes the formation of the broad-based alliances needed to confront the problems of minorities and the poor. In fact, Michael Lerner used the closing plenary to address just this issue.

MARK LEVINE
NATIONAL COORDINATOR
FOUNDATION FOR ETHICS AND MEANING
NEW YORK, NY

GIVE MSAS A CHANCE

In "A Republican MSA-Bomb" (April 29), Matt Rees is right to assert that "despite Gingrich's wavering, MSAs should get another chance."

MSAs are not just a boon for the wealthy and healthy; they offer a chance to preserve the quality of medical care and elicit incentives for individuals to remain healthy. And for those who are ill, MSAs provide security via high-deductible catastrophic insurance coverage.

As things now stand, the tax code discriminates against self-employed persons and those whose employers cannot provide medical insurance. The present tax code favors corporations and the well-connected, but not individual citizens. Short of abolition of the Sixteenth Amendment, MSAs are the only tool available to level the playing field.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons correctly asserts that "without MSAs, most Americans will be forced into rationed care arrangements profiting special interests."

MIGUEL A. FARIA, JR., M.D.
MACON, GA

THE "WOMEN FLY" CAP

Wendy Shalit's article suggests that a baseball cap represents a symbol of social pressure that ultimately resulted in the tragic death of seven-year-old student pilot Jessica Dubroff ("The Death of Girlhood," April 29). In fact, "The Message of Jessica Dubroff's Cap" has nothing to do with "The Death of Girlhood."

The Women Fly Project began in the fall of 1990 to generate awareness and recognition of women's achievements in aviation. To communicate this rich history, we have created a series of designs that are screenprinted on T-shirts, bookbags, and baseball caps. Each item is hand-tagged with biographical information about the woman being honored.

Our hope is that the image will spark a conversation and that the lives of great role models such as the Women's Air Force Service Pilots of World War II, Bessie Coleman, Louise Thaden, and others will come to light. The project has grown to include women pioneers of other disciplines—in science, art, politics—and Women Fly has become a metaphor for having the courage to explore one's full human potential.

Our project, quite simply, is there to provide positive role models for young and old alike. Our eponymous baseball cap serves as a reminder of this goal.

CHELE ISAAC
WOMEN FLY, SPEAK, INC.
CHICAGO, IL

Wendy Shalit is a joy to read. I set out to read Pippi Longstocking after reading her Babar piece. I usually studiously avoid TV network news in general, and *People*-magazine-style pieces anywhere they ambush me, so I was almost perfectly ignorant of the Jessica Dubroff tragedy. Wendy Shalit told a horrible story with grace and insight.

TED LINDSAY
WESTPORT, CT

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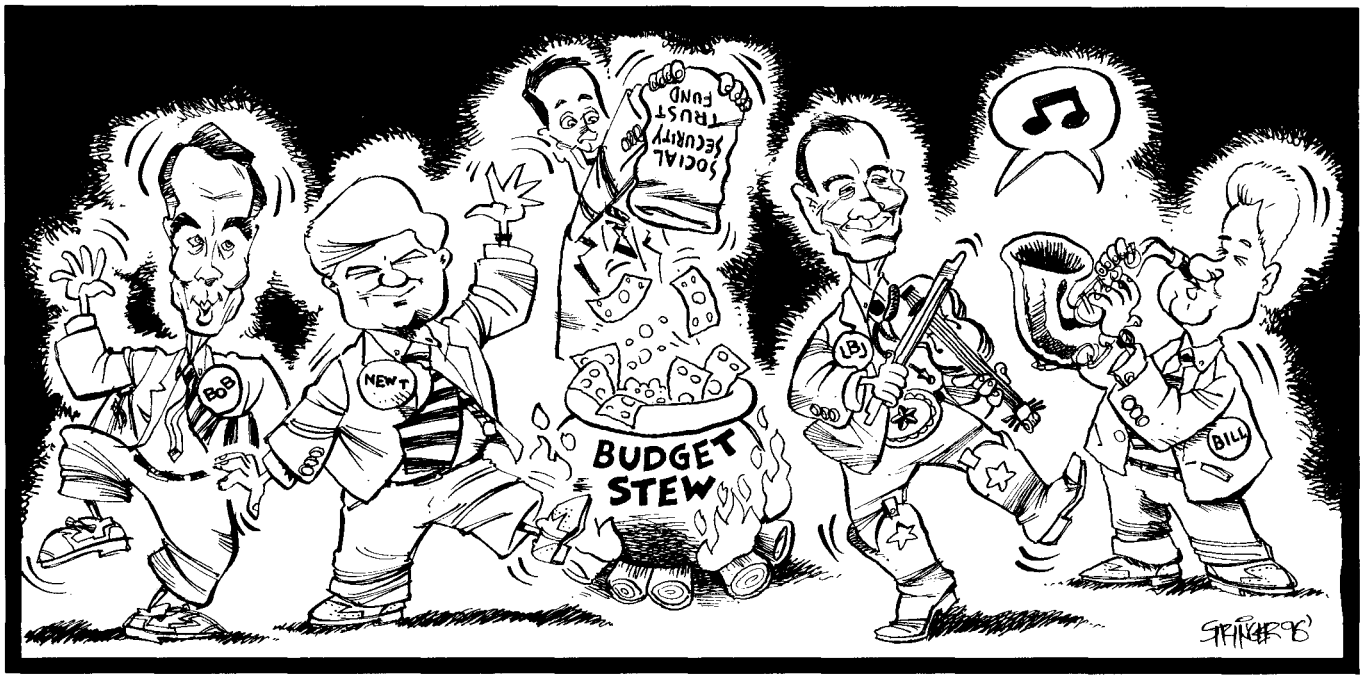

Today's leaders dance to LBJ's tune as America's trust funds boil away.

With all this talk about tax reform and generous deductions for the poor, Congress is not being honest with the American people. The truth is nearly 40 percent of Americans are "exempted" from income tax, despite all the hot air from Washington crying for their protection. This hot air is cause enough for global warning; it certainly prevents honest tax relief. The real burden for this group, no matter the size of their income, is the Social Security payroll tax. No generous deductions here. Neither raising income taxes on the rich nor moving to a flat tax will do anything to provide *payroll* tax relief for the working poor.

LBJ still calls the tune.

To hide the cost of the Viet Nam war, LBJ pooled all our independent trust funds into one giant pot. Because a stew obscures its exact ingredients, this *budget* stew became the *tax-raising* tool of choice for government, without ever using those dirty words. Over the past 10 years, payroll tax rates are up by more than 50 percent with revenues more than doubled, yet the trust funds are on the verge of bankruptcy again. Recent government shutdowns illustrate how the treasury can take money from one "trust" fund and transfer it to another with impunity. Such activity would be criminal in the corporate world, but not in Washington.

Trust fund reform is the right wine for a tax reform entrée.

Let's face it. If you are under 55, you have a greater chance of being abducted by aliens than ever seeing your first Social Security check, under today's terms and conditions. As long as all the trust funds can be commingled at will, for political purposes, our future will not have the comfort our parents enjoy. All that awaits our children are historical footnotes of the foolish plan for a Great Society. Trust fund reform and tax reform are solutions that go hand-in-hand. Neither will succeed without the other.

The Social Security Ponzi scheme must stop now.

Our politicians are still dancing to LBJ's tune. Few have the guts to risk their career today for the future of our children. All trust funds must be taken off budget and the funds invested for real growth and savings as they are in other nations. As long as everything remains in one pot, payroll taxes will continue to rise to reduce the appearance of the deficit. We have laws against Ponzi schemes in the private sector. Maybe it's time the same laws are applied to our politicians.

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the weekly Standard

The Scandal of Campaign Finance Reform

If Bob Dole does the right thing, sometime in the next few weeks your morning newspaper will report the death of a major "bipartisan" proposal to reform campaign financing—a proposal killed off by the threat of a Republican filibuster in the United States Senate. The story will also point out that companion legislation is locked up tight in a committee room of the House of Representatives by that chamber's Republican leadership. Moneyed special interests and their puppet congressional incumbents will once again have triumphed over clean government and electoral fair play—or so the campaign-reform activists quoted in the story will squeal.

Let 'em squeal. The bills in question would exacerbate the ills they pretend to correct, and they would trample basic constitutional liberties in the process. Their proponents should be ashamed.

But they aren't. As American public discourse sinks ever deeper into the muck of phony "fairness" and egalitarianism, the traditional conduct of free elections—political democracy's central contests of people and ideas—is under dangerous assault.

Campaigns cost money. That money comes exclusively (presidential campaigns excepted) from voluntary individual and group donations. So the campaign treasuries of opposing candidates tend to reflect the relative size and force of their popular support. One side almost always begins with more support. And it spends that advantage on political advocacy—otherwise known as free speech—that it hopes to transform into a deciding plurality of votes. Elections are inherently "unequal," in other words. They are about winning and losing.

But in the eyes of a campaign reform activist, the natural *money* inequality of any given electoral competition delegitimizes its result. So he doggedly pursues, lo these past few decades, a clunky effort to legislate parity by imposing low, easily attainable limits beyond which no campaign may accept or expend donations. Campaign reform of this sort is essentially affirmative action for political opinions.

The scheme has repeatedly run up against a single, pesky obstacle: the Constitution, which bids Congress pass no law abridging the freedom of speech. In 1976, the Supreme Court struck down two-year-old legislation governing federal campaigns that limited contributions by wealthy candidates and imposed a wide-ranging series of caps on supposedly "excessive" spending. Campaign money is political speech, the court affirmed. And "the concept that government may restrict the speech of some elements of our society in order to enhance the relative voice of others is wholly foreign to the First Amendment."

But the court, alas, did let survive (on "anti-corruption" grounds) a congressional edict making it illegal for federal candidates to accept outside individual donations of more than $1,000. This "reform" has not improved American campaign practice. It has made fund-raising vastly more time-consuming and pervasive. The value of a $1,000 contribution is roughly half what it was when the law was first passed in 1974. Unless you are a wealthy person prepared to do a Steve Forbes routine, an effective campaign for federal office requires maybe four times as many financial backers as it once did. Incumbents have permanent institutional advantages in this money chase. And cash-strapped challengers must increasingly resort to the most cost-effective political speech there is: negative advertising.

Our politics is not adrift in a sea of corrupting money. Elections now absorb roughly the same, puny percentage of American wealth that they did 30 years ago—about five dollars annually per eligible voter, less than half the national potato-chip budget. But election money has become indisputably *uglier*, as a direct consequence of past campaign reform. And it is this very ugliness that campaign-reform activists cite as the best reason to restrict the market for political advocacy still further.

Caps on campaign spending may only be applied to candidates who accept them willingly, the Supreme Court says, and no candidate may be penalized for refusing to surrender his full First Amendment prerogatives. But the only "voluntary" spending cap that has ever passed constitutional muster—the one where-

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by major-party presidential candidates limit their election efforts and get taxpayer money in return—is deeply unpopular. We know this because there is a national referendum on the question every April 15: Last year, only 14 percent of us checked off the box on our 1040 form contributing $3 to the presidential campaign trust fund. Any explicit extension of taxpayer financing to *congressional* campaigns is politically impossible.

That means self-styled "clean Congress" crusaders must attempt to achieve their goal through surreptitious means. This year's campaign reform legislation would reduce the cost of mail and broadcast time for House and Senate candidates who agree to participate in a spending limits regime. It is public funding in disguise. Postal fees will rise overall to make up the difference. Commercial advertising rates will rise the same way—and retail consumers will pay for them. And there is nothing voluntary about these inducements. They are coercive; any candidate who dares announce an intention to refuse them gets his promotional costs automatically doubled.

The House and Senate bills ban campaign contributions by organized groups of like-minded citizens. They ban similar groups from spending money to advocate the election or defeat of any federal candidate. And, most alarmingly, they threaten to squash the political activity of advocacy organizations like Emily's List and the Christian Coalition, whose voter information projects and campaign guides would now be subject to overbearing regulation by the Federal Election Commission.

The legislation grants the FEC authority over any "expression of support for or opposition to a specific candidate, to a specific group of candidates, or to candidates of a particular party." What is an "expression of support?" Any "suggestion to take action with respect to an election, such as to vote for or against, make contributions to, or participate in campaign activity, or to refrain from taking action." And what may the FEC do about such perfidious speech? It may block such speech from happening, with a prior-restraint injunction whenever the agency believes there is a "substantial likelihood that a violation . . . is about to occur."

This is a grotesque legislative assault on bedrock American freedoms, and a disgrace to its sponsors. A small, prominent handful of those sponsors are thoughtless or deluded Republicans, whose involvement grants campaign "reform" an unwarranted "bipartisan" label. For the most part, however, abridgments of political speech in the service of electoral "fairness" are a nasty fetish of modern liberalism. Campaign reform is a Democratic party obsession.

When Democrats last controlled the Congress, the Senate actually approved (in May 1993; how soon we forget) a resolution of endorsement for a constitutional amendment that would have explicitly carved out an exception to free speech, the first in American history, for campaign spending limits. What might happen if the Democratic party retook control of Congress and retained the White House next year? We would need the courts to protect the First Amendment.

But it shouldn't come to that. This year's Republican Congress should knock down the campaign finance reform proposal before it. With pride and gusto and no delay.

—David Tell, for the Editors

George Wallace's Tribe

by David Frum

In 1991, *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker published a book suggesting that Richard Nixon had, despite everything, been "one of us"—a liberal after all. Not even Wicker could ever have imagined that the day would come when liberals would attempt to rehabilitate George Wallace. But in a conservative era, liberals are in no position to be picky about the company they keep.

In March, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit told the University of Texas Law School that its affirmative action program had crossed the line from the pursuit of diversity into active reverse discrimination. The case wasn't really a very close call. The school grouped applicants into separate racial categories bundled in color-coded envelopes, evaluated by different committees. Texas is a huge school, without time for the exquisitely refined admissions process of a Yale or Stanford.

No, applicants were admitted or rejected on the basis of their grades and LSAT scores—and the score that sufficed to admit a member of a favored minority group would have consigned a white or Asian or, for that matter, Cuban-American applicant to the reject pile.

This was exactly the kind of crude quota-mongering that the U.S. Supreme Court forbade in 1977, and has continued to forbid ever since. In *Hopwood* v.

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Texas, the Fifth Circuit—the court responsible for many of the great civil-rights victories of the 1950s and 1960s—forcefully reminded Texas that whites as well as minorities are entitled to the equal protection of the law.

Appealing such an unpromising case after so definitive a decision calls for more than ordinary legal talent. So the University of Texas hired itself one of the most ingenious constitutional lawyers in America, Harvard Law School's Laurence Tribe, to ask the Supreme Court to review *Hopwood*. On April 30, Tribe and Texas attorney general Dan Morales filed a writ of certiorari—a formal application for review—with the high court.

Morales offered six reasons for overruling *Hopwood*, but one stands out. That is Reason Number Four, which would have brought a swell of recognition to the late governor of Alabama: "The court of appeals had no subject-matter jurisdiction to entertain an action against Texas and its officials in clear derogation of the protections of traditional sovereign immunity contained in the Eleventh Amendment." Which is to say, the constitutional sovereignty of the states bars citizens from suing them in federal court for racial discrimination. Welcome back to Alabama, circa 1962.

Kent Lemon

Laurence Tribe

Constitutional law doesn't usually invite humor, but you have to believe that Prof. Tribe and his interns were chortling hard as they hit the save key after typing in that argument. So they were all wrong, all the civil-rights cases? Linda Brown had no right to sue the Board of Education? Nicholas Katzenbach had no power to push George Wallace out of the schoolhouse door?

Well . . . not quite. In *those* cases, Tribe seems to think, it was perfectly acceptable to sue states without their consent. This case, though, is different. It's not because Cheryl Hopwood and her fellow plaintiffs are white—perish the thought! It's because the plaintiffs rested a portion of their case on Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which forbids state institutions receiving federal funds to discriminate on grounds of race. And that bit of the act—a bit likely to inconvenience many state universities that admit applicants using racially lopsided procedures like those of the University of Texas—is the one bit, Tribe contends, that can't be used against a sovereign state in federal court.

It's an amazingly audacious argument. Let's hope the Supreme Court does decide to grant Prof. Tribe his writ—if only so that we can all enjoy the sight of this famous advocate ending his oral argument with a thrilling new battle cry: "Reverse discrimination now! Reverse discrimination tomorrow! Reverse discrimination forever!" ♦

Dole's Gender Trap

by Danielle Crittenden

Bob Dole has, he says, a plan to end the gender gap—but in his effort to woo the female public, he is behaving like a tired roué whose pick-up lines keep falling flat. "Did I mention my war record?" "Hey, I'm great with kids." "I've got a lot of experience" (wink, wink).

His boast last week to a group of Republican women that he "led the Senate" in funding the $1.6 billion Violence Against Women Act was the political equivalent of taking off his tie and replacing it with a gold chain. Whom is he trying to seduce? For the Violence Against Women's Act has done nothing to stop violence against women—while it has done everything to line the coffers of feminist organizations whose bogus statistics and hysterical testimony to Congress brought about the act in the first place.

As Christina Hoff Sommers wrote in a memo to

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members of Congress before the bill was passed last summer, "The preponderance of testimony came from feminist researchers and activists who were invited to Washington to speak before the [House appropriations] committee. The recognized experts on domestic violence and rape were not invited. Moreover, in almost every instance where there was a clear choice in accepting inflated figures promoted by activists or accepting the far more moderate figures reported by government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Justice, the Committee trusted the advocacy members."

The advocates asserted that women were more likely to be injured by violence than "automobile accidents, muggings, and cancer deaths combined." There was no source for this statistic, as Sommers pointed out, but a reporter with the Newhouse News Service traced it to domestic-violence activists, who admitted it was just a guess on their part. They claimed "three to four million women a year are physically abused" and that "more than one third [of wives] are battered repeatedly every year." Congress ignored the most recent data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which showed that the number of total sexual assaults against women had in fact fallen by as much as 20 percent by 1995, from a high of 485,000 in 1993. Congress also dismissed other federal research that demonstrated that women are dramatically more likely to be assaulted by strangers than by their husbands (husbands account for only 2 percent of criminal attacks against women).

But the inflated assertions paid off for the groups that made them—from the Battered Women's Justice Project to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Among the booty distributed after the act's passage was $205 million for "rape prevention education," to be funneled through the Department of Health and Human Services (read: more millions for advocacy groups). "Instead of enacting effective measures for preventing and punishing violent crime," said Anita K. Blair of the Independent Women's Forum in her testimony before the committee, "it creates an expensive and unnecessary expansion of federal bureaucracy. The best use of taxpayers' dollars . . . would be to isolate and incarcerate the offenders [and impose] longer mandatory sentences and the abolition of parole." As it is, there aren't even a few bucks put aside for karate classes.

Dole's declaration of support for the Violence Against Women Act is unnerving not simply because it reveals how unabashedly proud he is to endorse Democratic pork, but because it shows again how little he understands the concerns of his constituency—male and female.

On the surface, it is astonishing that this election is not a cakewalk for Dole, *especially* among women voters. Compared to his opponent, he is manly, decent, honorable, a respectful and faithful husband, and a war hero. The fact that he might remind women of their fathers is, I think, an advantage—among Republican women, anyway. But maybe the female public is just less forgiving than the male of Dole's one great failing, the failing that his support for the Violence Against Women's Act underscores: his lack of conviction and vision.

After all, the only thing a woman can't stand more than a man who won't ask for directions when he's lost is a man who asks for directions all the time.

Danielle Crittenden is editor of the* Women's Quarterly, *published by the Independent Women's Forum.

HALE AND . . . FAREWELL?

by Rex Nelson

Little Rock

A SMALL COTERIE OF LAWYERS, reporters, and retirees looking for entertainment gathers each morning at the federal courthouse in downtown Little Rock. It's just a few blocks to the state capitol, where Bill Clinton had his office for 12 years; the Rose law firm, where Hillary Rodham Clinton had her office for 16 years; the Excelsior Hotel, where Paula Corbin Jones claims Bill Clinton sexually harassed her in May 1991; and other stops on the Clinton scandal tour.

The scandal tour may have hit its final destination. Republicans who were expecting a new bombshell to come out of downtown Little Rock during the Whitewater trial of Democratic governor Jim Guy Tucker, James McDougal, and Susan McDougal have been sorely disappointed. Nothing has emerged to derail the president's reelection campaign, and few people are paying attention to the trial of the president's former Whitewater business partners and his successor as governor. At this point, it's far from certain the prosecution can obtain any convictions. The defense rested

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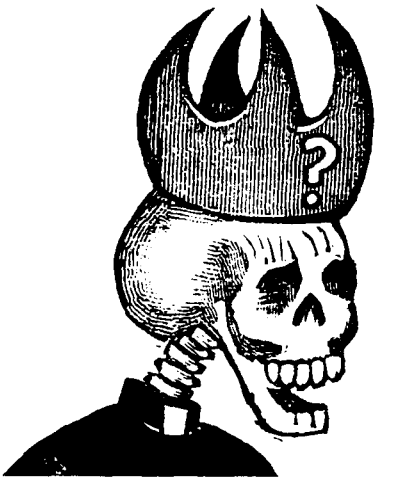
Why Liberal Catholicism Is Suicidal



The liberal, anti-doctrinal spirit is poisoning the Catholic Church in America. Liberal Catholics don't like to talk about sin and its consequences. But then why did Christ bother to get crucified? And what are we saved from? Liberal priests are silent about Hell — but if there's no Hell, why be good? Indeed, why go to church? Not surprisingly, church attendance has dropped dramatically. Liberals are forever bellyaching about the "sexist, homophobic, oppressive" Church. Thus they're unable to attract many converts. Liberal clerics excuse their people from the Church's high sexual standards. No wonder certain of them would excuse themselves too, hence so many sex scandals among the clergy. Liberal priests don't explain Catholic teaching to their flocks. No wonder Catholics are being won over by fundamentalists, cults, and New Agers, who *do* know what they believe and why.

Liberal Catholicism denies the binding character of Scripture, tradition, and Magisterium: One need only "follow one's conscience," which amounts to doing only what's convenient. Why belong to a church which preaches *that*? People instinctively do what's convenient, without any coaxing from the clergy. Liberal Catholics are just imitators of liberal *Protestants*. By making Christianity comfortably ambiguous, have liberal Protestant churches been flooded with converts? No. They're actually dying! Why? Because they offer *no authoritative answers* to life's big questions: why am I here? what is true religion and virtue? how do I get to Heaven? By essentially turning themselves into debate clubs and therapy centers, they've failed to offer people anything unique and unsurpassable. They elicit no commitment and little interest.

Catholicism in America could go down the tubes too if authentic Catholics don't stand up for the Faith. This is where the NEW OXFORD REVIEW comes in. An orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, we combat dissent and decay in the Church, and decadence and despair in Western culture. We "belong in every loyal Catholic's arsenal," according to Fr. Joseph Fessio.

We have an international audience, and we're published out of infamous Berkeley. Can anything good come out of Berkeley? ("Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" — John 1:46). Try us and see! According to *The Catholic Answer*, we're having "a notable impact" for the good on our troubled Church. We've been acclaimed by Walker Percy as "admirable" and by *National Review* as "first-rate."

If you get nauseated by the toxic gasses in the Church, get some relief by breathing the fresh air of dynamic orthodoxy in the pages of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW!

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last week after just two witnesses—James McDougal in person and the president on videotape.

It's been a long haul. U.S. district judge George Howard, Jr. is the Lance Ito of Arkansas—he allows trials to drag on for weeks and even months, and this one has been a drag too. Courtroom regulars have been spotted napping on warm spring afternoons, leading to speculation about just how alert the jurors can possibly be. If they weren't alert, the prosecution is probably doomed. Prosecutors took the jury on a convoluted journey through a series of complex and obscure financial transactions at the heart of the case. Tucker and the McDougals are accused of defrauding the government and two financial institutions during the 1980s in transactions totaling about $3 million. Most of the case is based on information given to the prosecution by a former municipal court judge and Little Rock businessman named David Hale. Hale was the trial's key witness, and it is vital to the prosecution's prospects that jurors found him credible during his nine days on the stand.

It would come as no surprise if the jurors liked Hale, who has a talent for making people like him. He is a former national president of the Jaycees, which marks him as a past master of schmooze, with a big smile, shiny shoes, funny jokes, and a sincere demeanor. During his first few days on the stand, Hale showed his Jaycee colors, speaking with confidence, maintaining eye contact with the jurors, and deftly handling the questions that were asked.

IT WOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE IF THE JURORS LIKE DAVID HALE, WHO HAS A TALENT FOR MAKING PEOPLE LIKE HIM. HE IS A FORMER NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE JAYCEES, WHICH MARKS HIM AS A PAST MASTER OF SCHMOOZE.

As his testimony continued into a second week, however, cracks began to develop. By the time he was excused, Hale had admitted lying not only to the Small Business Administration (big deal), but to the FBI (a real big deal). Hale has made the only direct allegations against the president in the Whitewater case. He claims that then-governor Clinton benefited from a $300,000 loan Hale's firm made to a marketing firm owned by Susan McDougal. Hale says Clinton put pressure on him in 1986 to make the loan. That allegation led the defense to call Clinton as a witness, which led in turn to the testimony the president videotaped in the White House on April 28.

In both a legal and political context, much of what is happening in Little Rock is about spin, and Tucker is the chief spinner down here. After being indicted in August by a federal grand jury, Tucker began trying to influence the potential jury pool. He quickly characterized himself as the victim of overzealous Republican prosecutors who, unable to hang Clinton legally, had decided to go after the next biggest Democratic target in Arkansas. Tucker's party line—that Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth Starr and his people are modern-day carpetbaggers intent on destroying the reputations of as many southern boys as possible—was picked up by other members of the state's Democratic establishment and several newspaper columnists. The questions about Starr soon spread beyond the borders of Arkansas. Indeed, there has been much more national media focus in recent weeks on Starr's perceived conflicts of interest than there has been on the trial itself.

Though Arkansans seem uninterested in Starr and have long since gotten used to the peculiar antics of Jim and Susan McDougal (it would take pages to detail them all), they are genuinely interested in what happens to Tucker. The most common sentiment heard in coffee shops and on courthouse squares across the state this spring is that Tucker is guilty of some of the charges, but that the jury won't ever convict him.

A statewide poll of voters who participate regularly in state elections, conducted in early April by the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, showed that only 19 percent believe Tucker when he says he is innocent of the charges against him. Forty-four percent think the governor is lying, and 37 percent are not sure what to think. Tucker's ratings probably would be even lower among those who don't vote. His popularity has plummeted, as evidenced by the fact that his plan for rewriting the state constitution received only 20 percent of the vote in a special election in December, and a bond issue he favored got only 13 percent of the vote in a January special election. Unlike Clinton, Tucker seems to have little political capital remaining. He also has yet another Starr indictment to contend with after this trial is over.

Most Arkansans don't trust their governor, but right now the opinion of only 12 Arkansans matters. As for former Arkansans Bill and Hillary Clinton, they couldn't be happier that few people outside Arkansas are paying attention to the goings-on in Judge Howard's courtroom.

***Rex Nelson is political editor of the* Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.**

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Go West, Old Man

by Fred Barnes

Sacramento

When Senate majority leader Bob Dole flew to San Diego in March, Republican congressman Chris Cox rode along and jumped at the chance to pitch Dole on the need to campaign aggressively in California against President Clinton this fall. Forget Clinton's big lead (20 points in public polls, 17 points in private GOP surveys), Cox said. The state isn't locked up for the president. If Dole spends plenty of time in the state and stresses two issues, illegal immigration and affirmative action, he can win California, the one state crucial to Clinton's reelection. Once the plane reached San Diego, California governor Pete Wilson joined the entourage. He buttonholed Dole and made exactly the same case for a full-blown Dole effort in California.

If that wasn't enough, Dole got another earful in April when California Assembly speaker Curt Pringle dropped by his office in Washington. Dole can win the state by copying Wilson's successful reelection campaign in 1994, Pringle said. Yeah, yeah, yeah, Dole said. He'd heard that line of argument a few times. "He was frustrated there was talk he would abandon California," Pringle says. As Pringle left, Jill Hanson, political director of the Dole campaign, assured him this won't happen. Dole, she said, "is 100 percent committed to California."

Michael Ramirez

Pete Wilson

Maybe so, but Republicans in California are still apprehensive that Dole may do what President Bush did in 1992. By Labor Day, Bush concluded the state was a lost cause. He stopped spending money and campaigning in California. The result was terror in California GOP ranks. And with Clinton running strongly and lifting the entire Democratic ticket, the Republican drive to capture the state legislature fell short, House gains didn't materialize, and the GOP lost both Senate races. Now, Republicans are desperate for Dole to show he won't cut and run. "He probably needs to invest more time here than any other state because Bush's write-off of the state is so firmly planted in our mind," says assemblyman Jim Brulte, the former GOP leader in the statehouse.

The political logic behind a major Dole push in California is simple: California is big and Clinton needs it. The state's 54 electoral votes are 20 percent of the 270 required to win the presidency. And since Clinton must take California, given Dole's likely strength elsewhere, denying him the state means Dole wins the election. California Republicans subscribe to the adage of Bush strategist Lee Atwater, who died in 1990: "If they need it, I want it." Even if Clinton captures California, forcing him to spend time and money in the state is important. That would detract from the Clinton drive in other states.

The president's allies here have no reason to take Dole seriously at this stage—and they don't. "If Clinton's prospects were any better, I'd be afraid I was on drugs," says Bill Carrick, a senior adviser to the Clinton-Gore campaign. Clinton has a natural advantage. Younger, more vigorous, and more optimistic-sounding than Dole, he seems more comfortable in California. "On the surface," admits Brulte, "Bill Clinton appears to be a better fit for California than Bob Dole." Clinton has hardly taken the state for granted. He's made 23 trips to California since he became president. Dole has come rarely, and then usually for fund-raisers. He spent two days touring California just before the March presidential primary, but even Dole advisers soured on that trip. Choreographed by Wilson's political team, it included a trip to the Mexican border in San Diego and a visit to the death chamber at San Quentin prison. "It was a 'Pete Wilson's greatest hits' tour," sneers Carrick.

That was no accident. The formula recommended to Dole for winning California is essentially the Wilson model. It's what one Dole adviser calls the "Central Valley strategy." Dole would forget about Los Angeles and San Francisco, both Democratic strong-

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holds, and count on Republican strength in San Diego and Orange County. His campaign would concentrate on the farm belt from Sacramento to the inland empire east of L.A., the home of the state's swing voters. If Dole does this, "he could be a very good candidate for California," argues Steve Merksamer, a Sacramento lobbyist and senior adviser to the Dole campaign. "There's not much difference between a wheat grower in Kansas and a grape grower in Fresno."

The other part of the strategy is a full-throated embrace of Wilson's twin issues, immigration and quotas. Carrick insists reruns don't work in elections, but Dole may try anyway. "Immigration," says Pringle, "is the hottest populist issue in the state." And Cox told Dole it will become even hotter should Clinton veto the new immigration bill. If the final version allows states to bar illegal immigrants from public education, the president is pledged to kill it. Affirmative action may be more salient, however, since a referendum banning it in state government—the California Civil Rights Initiative—is on the ballot this fall and is expected to pass. Dole is already in sync with the initiative, having cosponsored a bill to get rid of racial and gender preferences in the federal government.

Still, it would be an enormous gamble for Dole to emphasize California. Brulte says the campaign would have to earmark $10 million for TV spots. Another $10 million would have to be spent by the Republican National Committee for get-out-the-vote and other efforts. That would make Dole a player, though not automatically a threat to Clinton. Dole must also bring order to his operation here. The two top California Republicans, Wilson and attorney general Dan Lungren, have bickered over managing the Dole effort. For now, Wilson is in charge. The test of his effectiveness is how many times he can persuade Dole to come to California. To make his presence felt, Dole needs to campaign here two or three separate times before the GOP convention in San Diego in August, then at least weekly in the fall. That would be a major commitment of time in a state where he starts far behind.

California Republicans have a surprising ally in Washington, House speaker Newt Gingrich. He told a GOP delegation from Sacramento he believes California should be a top priority for Dole. For one thing, that will help Republicans avert losses in congressional races and leave the House in GOP hands (and Gingrich as speaker). Gingrich said he won't abandon California. He'll show up time after time even if Dole doesn't.

There's a way for Dole to touch off panic in the Clinton campaign in California: choose Wilson or Lungren as his running mate. Lungren is more popular, but Wilson makes more sense. By September, Wilson may have gained a bit in popularity, but that's not the point. With Wilson spending full-time as a candidate in California, masterminding a disciplined, relentless campaign, he could swing the state toward Dole. And Dole would be free to focus on Michigan and Ohio. "Pete Wilson knows how to win a California race," says Pringle. That goes for a lot. ♦

Ulivo and Kicking

by Michael Barone

I WENT TO ITALY A WEEK BEFORE the April 21 election hoping to observe a politics different from ours. Instead, I was struck again and again by the similarities. Begin with campaign tactics. The leaders of the winning center-left Ulivo coalition rolled into their final rally April 18 in *il pullman*—a big-windowed bus on which they had been campaigning across the country. Walter Veltroni, number-two man in both Ulivo and its largest party, the PDS, the former Communists, told the crowd of 150,000: "We went to hundreds of piazzas and listened to hundreds of thousands. We saw a lot of suffering. Just think of the workers in front of Fiat. How can they survive on 1,300,000 lira a month?"

While the Left was busy feeling Italians' pain, the Right was busy issuing 10-point contracts with the voters: The *Contratto con gli italiani*, signed by all its candidates, was the chief campaign offering of the center-right Polo coalition.

If Italy's politicians took their cues from Clinton and Gingrich, the voters I interviewed on the streets of Rome, in the bourgeois Prati district near the Vatican and in more raffish Trastevere, across the Tiber, seemed familiar as well. Men dressed in tweed sportcoats—architects, professors, retired civil servants—almost invariably supported Ulivo and the PDS and had voted Communist before the party's name-change. Elegantly, smoothly, effortlessly, with a mixture of idealism and snobbery, they purred out the party line. "We are more cultured," explained my indeed very cultured and capable pro-PDS interpreter.

But young voters, especially those with short hair, usually favored Polo—though they were less likely to back former prime minister and media magnate Silvio

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Berlusconi and his Forza Italia! than Giancarlo Fini and his Alleanza Nazionale, formerly the neo-Fascists. "The Left is outdated," they said. And if they were skeptical about Berlusconi's promise to cut taxes, "at least he won't raise them." Educated by leftish teachers and professors, surrounded by a mostly pro-left media (except for the TV stations and newspapers owned by Berlusconi), they understand that their taxes go for welfare benefits they'll never receive and that the protections older workers enjoy mean there are no jobs for the young.

But there are Italian political types you won't find in the U.S. Like the grizzled fiftyish manual laborer Palmiro (presumably named for longtime Communist party leader Palmiro Togliatti) who backs the Rifondazione Communista, the party that was formed in protest when the Communist party changed its name. Or the fortysomething woman who says she votes Socialist because her late grandmother was a Socialist partisan guerrilla fighter against the Nazis—in World War II. In the *prima repubblica*, which ended in 1992 after four decades of chronic instability, most Italian regions voted for the party backed by those who carried the battle against the Nazis in those terrible years from 1943 to 1945—the Christian Democrats where the U.S. Army was in control, from Sicily up to Rome; the Communists where Communist partisans fought the Nazis in the "Red Belt" from Tuscany to Bologna.

THE TWO LARGEST PARTIES WERE BUILT ON FAITHS—CATHOLICISM AND COMMUNISM—IN WHICH FEW ITALIANS NOW BELIEVE.

I also encountered voters who have made journeys from left to right and vice versa in the four years since the *prima repubblica*—Christian Democrats whose concern for the poor has sent them to Ulivo, anticlerical Republicans whose free-market views have sent them right to Polo.

The *prima repubblica*'s two largest parties were built on two faiths—Catholicism and Communism—in which few Italians believe anymore. So the political system is struggling to create something like a two-party system. Starting in 1994, Italy elected three-quarters of its Chamber of Deputies from single-member districts, as we do here; only one-quarter were sent to Rome by proportional representation. As a result, 26 parties sprang into existence, and soon party alliances began forming. The first was Berlusconi's, between his new Forza Italia party, the former neo-fascists, and the Liga Nord (which believes in separating the prosperous north from the rest of the country). The Berlusconi alliance won the March 1994 election, but the Liga Nord split off soon after and the government fell in December 1994. Then the supposedly non-political president, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, refused to hold the new elections Berlusconi wanted and simply installed central banker Lamberto Dini as prime minister instead. That gave time for the center-left Ulivo coalition to be formed—primarily including the former Communists and some former Christian Democrats like newly elected prime minister Romano Prodi.

The Ulivo victory has been hailed as a victory for the Left, and it does formally install the former Communists in office for the first time since the *prima repubblica* collapsed. But in truth, all the major parties received about the same percentage this time as in 1994. Indeed, if Italy's 1994-96 shift to the left were duplicated in the United States, Republicans would not only hold Congress but would elect Bob Dole president.

Ulivo prevailed not because of a shift in national opinion but from some very successful backstage maneuverings. And it did not campaign as a very leftist party. Ulivo rhetoric sounded very much like the New Democratic themes Bill Clinton sounds in campaign years. Its leaders pledged that Ulivo would cut back government and meet the European Union Maastricht Treaty requirements for a common currency; in his last debate with Berlusconi, Prodi held up a copy of *Business Week* with his picture and the caption "Italian Renaissance."

The major argument in the Italian election was over how to discipline, downsize, devolve, even dismantle an over-large government which is strangling the economy and is losing the capacity to do even those things it used to do well. The contrast is not presented quite crisply. On the right, Berlusconi wants to cut government more than the former neo-fascists; on the left, Prodi wants to cut government a bit, and so probably does the former Communist party, but the alliance's leftist wing wants to beef it back up. That means the Ulivo government will have to get some votes from the Right to pass its budget.

Italy's big business leaders have made their peace with the new government; they mistrust Berlusconi as a manipulator and despise him as a parvenu. The press, except for Berlusconi's TV stations and newspapers, was pro-Left. The Catholic church was split, with many former Christian Democrats in both coalitions; Ulivo made a point of noting that Prodi is a practicing Catholic (just as left parties in Britain and America have conspicuously religious leaders in Tony Blair and Bill Clinton). Of course the unions and government employees were for the Left. "We had everyone against

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us," Berlusconi said after the election. And yet the center-right coalition almost won. The Right had the votes, the Left the maneuverings. In proportional voting for the country's lower house, probably the best gauge of party support, the center-right beat the Ulivo coalition 44 to 43 percent (the margin widens to 10 points if the far left is removed from the tally).

Ulivo could not have succeeded had it not moved convincingly to the right. The Italian election is thus another example of a remarkable worldwide trend; the trend that, for the past 20 years, most elections have been won by parties of the Right. Parties of the Left can and do win, but only when they tack rightward, and credibly. Bill Clinton has moved to the right of late; the question remains whether he has done so credibly.

Michael Barone is co-editor of the **Almanac of American Politics** *and a columnist with* **U.S. News & World Report.**

My Article Problem—And Ours

by Robert Weissberg

That university professors and administrators are intimidated by the issue of race is obvious. Why? Is not tenure sufficient protection against retribution? Based on recent experience as a result of publishing an article on the subject, let me offer some clues to the fear that racial questions provoke on campus. My encounters are hardly earth-shaking, nor, for that matter, have I suffered any real harm. I remain tenured, teach courses, and continue my life. But, to the extent that my experiences are typical, they help explain the deafening silence emanating from higher education on issues of race.

The February 12, 1996, issue of The Weekly Standard featured my article "Potemkin Diplomas." It described how universities "make the numbers" for black graduation rates: special courses, easy transfer credits, steering students away from tough courses, tolerance of cheating, generous grading by ideological sympathizers, and the like. The specific examples I used came from the University of Illinois, where I teach, but the phenomenon is a general one. The article indicted opportunistic, craven administrators who substitute diplomas for education and make minority students willing dupes of academic fraud. I also noted that many whites have long enjoyed similar "benefits."

Three days after publication, an angry delegation of four "offended" black students clutching highlighted copies arrived to confront me with their boiling outrage. Mere words cannot capture this encounter. In the course of this meeting, I was told that: Clarence Thomas was not black; the federal government could instantly cure inner-city school woes merely by spending the money; standardized tests such as the SAT had no validity; academic achievement was just a matter of being rich; and their own education was genuine, given their considerable efforts. What preferential treatment they may have received, moreover, was simply compensation for comparable benefits bestowed on wealthy white suburbanites. Peppered about were the usual obligatory accusations of racism, and in summation they labeled me an angry white male and demanded my firing for gross offensiveness.

THE USUAL ACCUSATIONS OF RACISM WERE PEPPERED ABOUT, AND IN SUMMATION THEY LABELED ME AN ANGRY WHITE MALE.

A few days later, two reporters from the *Daily Illini*, the predictably P.C. student newspaper, came to interview me. I said I had no fight to pick with minority students, that I believed they were being exploited for political purposes. Having again forcefully made my case, I honestly thought things would now dissipate. On February 23, the paper ran a front-page story headlined "Professor's article causes outrage." Some low-level administrators defended their programs and took pot- shots at me. An undergraduate was quoted as saying some "racist, ignorant bastards" work for the university. The head of my department, the person who decides my salary, mused, "I think that [Weissberg] has a unique perspective on the world. There is not one iota of substantiation behind his allegations." There was not a hint of balance anywhere in the story. One black student shortly afterwards e-mailed me, advising that I should "pucker lips when you kiss my ass as I walk down the aisle to obtain my sheepskin." I also noticed that my black students often looked at me oddly during my next few lectures, almost as if I had forgotten to remove my Klan regalia.

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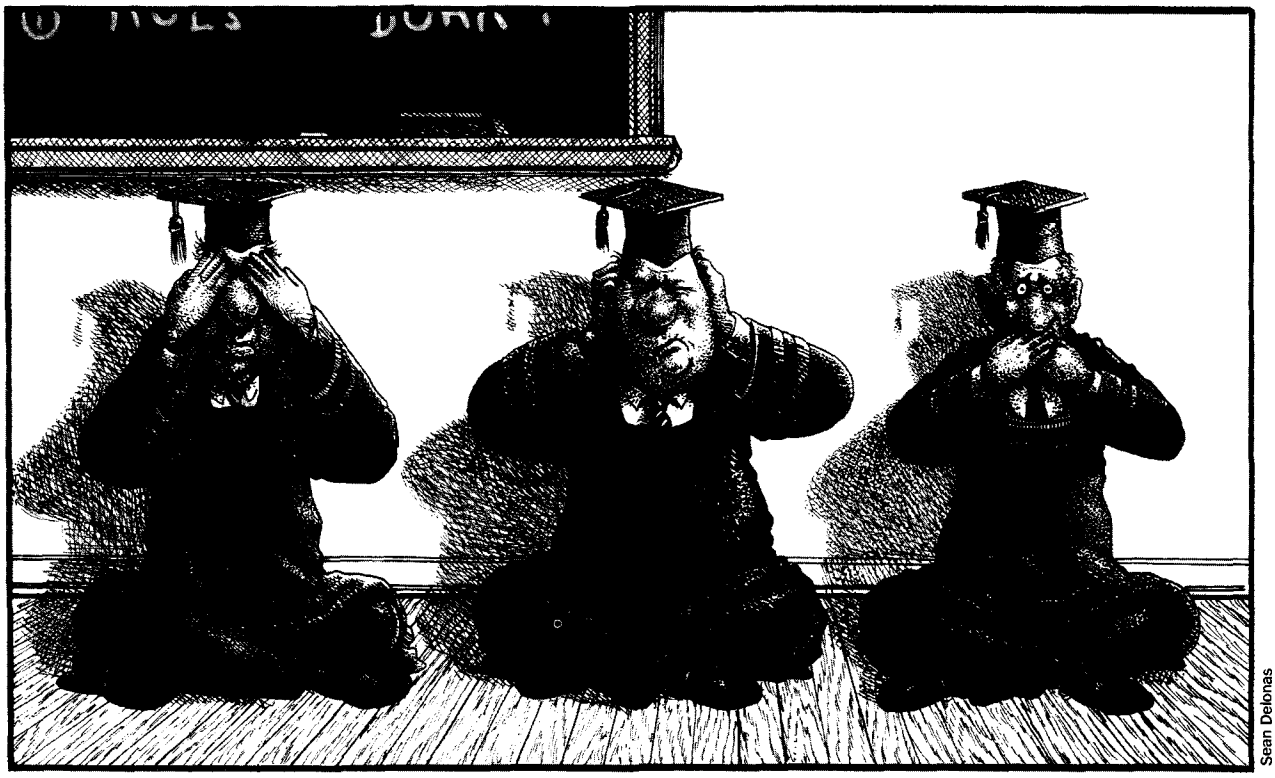

Sean Delonas

Colleagues began talking to me about the article. I never distributed it, and when asked how they saw it, all answered that a copy of it spontaneously appeared in their mailboxes. How it arrived there remains a mystery. Nor did any colleagues, even those conservatively inclined, offer encouragement or confirmation, even privately. Only a single, anonymous phone caller, surely a middle-aged white male and likely university employee, congratulated me on my courage. This caller, I should add, repeatedly stressed his desire "not to get involved" by identifying himself.

About a week later the *Daily Illini* published an editorial, "Prof's article hypocritical." While frankly acknowledging the truth of many of my accusations, the paper nevertheless criticized me for admitting that there is classroom soft-heartedness towards marginal minority students. The final communication (thus far) came from a beneficiary of minority-student programism. His spirited defense of his intensely managed educational experience was that, indeed, it was the genuine article. Twice he mentioned that program enrollees were "the best and the brightest" and not "at risk."

There are lessons here, lessons obscured in other prominent racial-intimidation tales. First and most surprising, don't count on support from fellow faculty, students, or any other witnesses, even sympathetic ones. On campus, only the editor of the undergraduate conservative student newspaper, a former student, offered a kind personal word. Save a few academic e-mails from afar, nothing. Only instant ostracism. Second, news about "racial insensitivity," no matter how remote, travels even faster than juicy malicious gossip. On the very day I received my copy of the issue in which my article appeared, a Marxist colleague was already challenging my analysis.

Finally, no amount of explaining, citing evidence, or argumentation, in public or in private, can placate the offended. The better the explanation, the worse the outcome. I was hopelessly guilty of saying "bad things" about programs "helping" blacks. Regardless of motives or veracity, I was a criminal. Angry confrontational "justice" here is swift and unappealable; publicly defending myself or offering evidence would only draw more outrage. Imagine if I had cited *The Bell Curve* (though it does document my point)!

Professors do not shop at a marketplace of ideas; on race, we shop at an intellectual convenience store, with high prices, poor selection, and an anxious proprietor following you down the aisles with a baseball bat. Judges, elected officials, parents, alumni associations, political organizations, and potential employers are the only people who can change the current state of affairs. The best a professor might accomplish is slightly to annoy the powers that be while making life unpleasant for himself. Take my word for it.

Robert Weissberg is professor of English at the University of Illinois.

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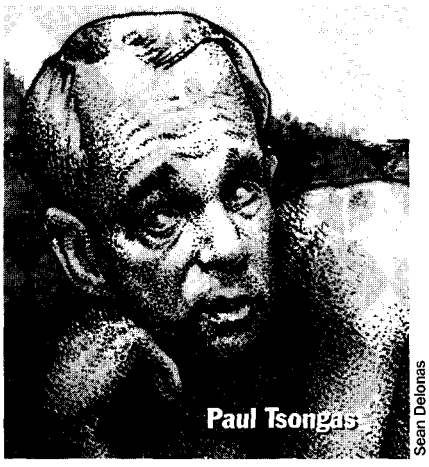
Foolish Senators, Tough Choices

By Andrew Ferguson

The life of a United States senator was not so long ago thought to be a thrilling thing. Any teenaged visitor to the Capitol could imagine it in the gaudiest terms—a glamorous adventure played out beneath the vaulted and gilded ceilings of that ancient building, across the blue-and-gold carpet of that hushed chamber, surrounded by obsequious young men and pretty young women, granting favors with the wave of a hand to bureaucrats and old classmates and visiting beauty queens, making with studied nonchalance the weekly trips to the Oval Office, the seasonal junkets to Budapest or Prague.

Or so it once seemed to the starry-eyed teen. Then came C-SPAN, and the pitiless cameras exposed the senator's workaday world for what it is: a hell of unrelieved discomfort and tedium. From the earliest morning to well past dusk, the senator is perched in half-empty hearing rooms, with piles of unreadable documents on either side. On the Senate floor he dozes at his desk as a colleague recites tributes to dying financial contributors. In the halls he is pelted with advice from greasy shysters whose salaries are several times greater than his own. As he crosses his office threshold he is beset by swarms of Kiwanii and Girl Scouts; the Future Farmers of America grow restless behind them; activists from LULAC and AAUW await him with sheaves of unanswerable demands. And then on Sunday mornings, while his fellow Americans give thanks to their God, he spends his time wishing he could be interviewed by Tim Russert—or worse, actually is interviewed by Tim Russert.


Paul Tsongas

Sean Delonas

It does not have to be like this, as the cleverer senators realize before long. There is a way out. A senator can elevate himself above his colleagues. One day he surveys the drudgery around him and resolves: Never again. He grows thoughtful, and instructs his staff to insert quotes from Reinhold Niebuhr in his speeches. He begins, ever so gently, to show disdain for his own party. He cultivates the *Washington Post* editorial board, and mysteriously acquires a reputation for fearless independence. He decries the sclerosis in government. He speaks of the tough choices that both parties refuse to face. Tough Choices: He folds the phrase into his bosom. He becomes a prophet of tough choices. He issues an ultimatum to his colleagues: Face the hard decisions or I'm gone. And in time he quits. He writes a book. He becomes a Tough Chooser.

We have before us now three recently published books from certified Tough Choosers, two by former senators, one by a current senator soon to retire. The books vary in length. Paul Tsongas's *Journey of Purpose* (Yale University Press, paper, $16.00), at 112 pages, has the feel of a pumped-up pamphlet. Warren Rudman's *Combat: Twelve Years in the U.S. Senate* (Random House, $27.50) doesn't seem much longer, but it stretches out to a seemingly substantive 287 pages, owing to the light touch of a generous typesetter. Bill Bradley's *Time Present, Time Past* (Knopf, $26.00) is genuinely dense and lengthy, weighing in at 442 pages.

There are stylistic differences among them as well. Tsongas favors single-sentence paragraphs, gnomic in their brevity. Imagine Kahlil Gibran writing position papers for the Brookings Institution:

> A global environment in disequilibrium dooms everyone.
>
> A world ruled by nuclear terrorists will know police states, not democracies.
>
> An America overburdened by national debt will compete with no one in the international trade markets.

Rudman, by contrast, is famously bellicose, and the only one of the three to hire a ghostwriter. His ghost has offered him a he-man prose style. Here he

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contemplates meeting Cap Weinberger, after the former defense secretary had criticized Rudman:

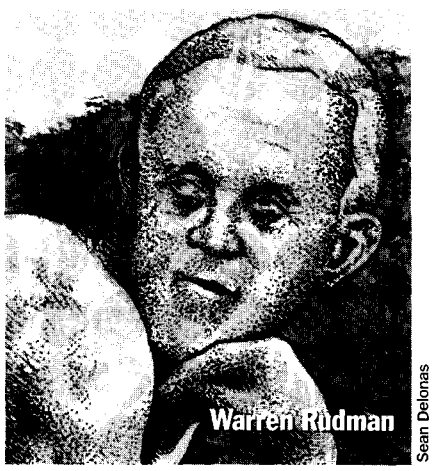
> It was just as well that Weinberger had skipped this ceremony. At the very least, I'd have told him exactly what I thought of his accusations, and I wouldn't have spoken in the Christmas spirit.

He'd a kicked his skinny ass.

Bradley, for his part, reminds you that ghostwriters have their uses. If nothing else, they don't allow their clients to begin chapters with Sominex substitutes like this: "In my years on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I've seen that what happens in Washington determines the future of many small water districts. . . . "

These matters aside, the books are remarkably similar. Each is part memoir, part manifesto. And each is written by a man whom the other two like very much.

Tsongas, writes Bradley, "challenges America to renew its commitment to future generations." Bradley, writes Rudman, is a man of "unquestioned integrity." Rudman, writes Tsongas, "is a throwback. . . . Fortunately for America, fate placed him in the middle of the great issues of the 1980s and 1990s." Tsongas, writes Rudman, is "a champion of fiscal sanity." Bradley, writes Tsongas, is a man "I admire enormously." Tough Choosers stick together.


Warren Rudman

Sean Delonas

But the esteem they hold for one another is as nothing compared with the esteem each holds for himself. Self-regard is the essential job qualification for the Tough Chooser. By definition he is facing the tough choices our current political system ignores, and who but a remarkable man would assume such a burden? Some men are born to it, others have it thrust upon them. Tsongas tells us he answered the call after his harrowing bout with cancer. "From this, finally, came an awareness beyond self, a growing awareness of generations," he writes. "I now think generationally. I now talk generationally. It comes naturally to me. . . ."

Bill Bradley shouldered the burden after an unexpectedly close reelection. "It freed me to share what was in my gut as well as in my mind," he tells us. Now he tries "to get beneath the continuous hoopla and reach for people's brains and hearts." Warren Rudman was chosen to be a Chooser from birth: "Hard-nosed, I have been called, or even pugnacious. . . . I was by nature . . . someone who made things happen."

But what things are those? The tough choices that Choosers face and the rest of us ignore most often have to do with the budget deficit. "Everyone knows that tough choices had to be made to get our economic house in order," Tsongas writes. "Unless we make those choices soon," Rudman adds in his own book, "all our resources won't be enough to save us." The solution is "leadership," and "facing reality"—both euphemisms for "raising taxes." When Rudman recounts President Reagan's agreement to raise taxes following the 1987 market crash, he writes: "The president was finally showing signs of leadership." Then came President Bush: "Bush, like Reagan, failed to show courage on the deficit"—which is to say, he waited too damn long to raise taxes.

The courageous, and incessant, call for tax increases is of a piece with tough-choice ideology. Tough Choosers are invariably "moderates," members of the "passionate center," in Tsongas's phrase. They call themselves "fiscal conservatives." This has the potential to sound harsh, so it is pleasantly balanced with their self-identification as "social moderates." In particular, this means they favor—in addition to tax increases—the right to abortion, federal intervention on behalf of environmentalists, gay rights, and preserving the vast array of social services, from AFDC to the Legal Services Corporation, that constitutes the welfare state.

The rest of us might see in this set of policy positions an agenda quite close to that of liberal Democrats—identical, in fact. But we would be wrong. For Tough Choosers are . . . well, different. They're just different. They disdain both parties. Rudman, a nominal Republican, is especially courageous in denouncing the GOP and the "uptight right-wingers" who threaten it from within. Democrats fare somewhat better under the witheringly independent glare of Tsongas and Bradley. "Rather than redefine our national circumstance," Bradley notes, "or admit the validity of some of the Republican criticism about the debilitating effects that impersonal bureaucracy had on the people it was supposed to help and then fight hard against the greed and self-centeredness of Reaganomics, Democrats hid." This sentence is typical, and not merely because it's so exhausting.

The message, writes Tsongas, "is a pox on both your houses." Republicans are bad because they want to destroy the country. Democrats are bad because

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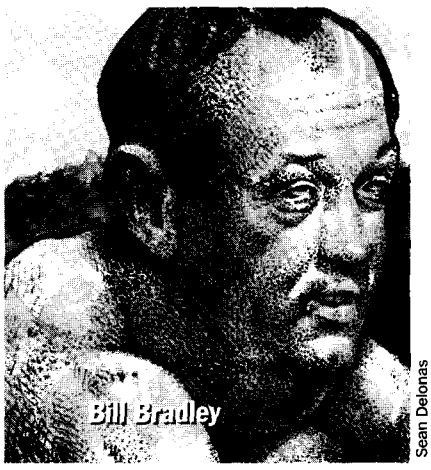
they aren't trying hard enough to stop the Republicans.

Tough Choosers despise partisanship. Petty political wrangling obscures the issues, and as Rudman explains, "I like people, and I like issues." Bradley describes a scene from the health-care debates of 1993-94:

> Senator George Mitchell summoned a bipartisan group of senators known as the mainstream group to his office overlooking the Mall. . . . Senators for much of the twentieth century had sat in this office to hash out tough decisions behind closed doors. On one wall was a painting of FDR . . . [on another] a portrait of Harry Truman. . . . "I get five or six ultimatums every day," Mitchell said. "Drawing a line in the sand is the new senatorial tactic."

It is a poignant scene, pregnant with the frustration of today's nonpartisans: A group of senators, mainstreamers to a man, are stymied in their efforts to nationalize the country's health-care system, so they gather under the gaze of the patron saints of nonpartisanship, FDR and Harry Truman, to hear George Mitchell complain about partisan zealots.



Sean Delonas

The mainstreamers failed to nationalize the health-care system, of course—yet another example of our avoidance of tough choices. But Rudman offers a tale with a happier ending. The successful Supreme Court nomination of David Souter was a triumph of the nonpartisanship that Tough Choosers hold up as ideal. Rudman is Souter's professional mentor and closest friend. When the vacancy opened with the resignation of William Brennan, he pushed his pal into President Bush's line of sight: "I suspected that the president was less concerned with how his nominee eventually voted on [*Roe* v. *Wade*] than that he or she be nominated without a fight." Rudman suspected right. No one knew how Souter would vote on anything. He was deliriously nonpartisan. Bush met with him briefly and then announced his nomination at once. "A remarkable example of presidential decision-making," Rudman writes. "On an incredibly important, potentially explosive decision, George Bush didn't blink." Or think. He made the hard decision.

The rest is history. Even the most ideological Republicans rallied round their president's nominee. Democrats were thrown by Souter's blankness, and only nine voted against him. As we know, he has since proved himself a man of the left, easily the equal of the ideologue he replaced and perhaps the most left-wing justice in memory, a sure vote against every professed principle of the president who nominated him. Rudman couldn't be more pleased. This is the way nonpartisanship is supposed to work. "After David began to cast votes," he writes, "all of the senators who voted against him came to me and said they'd been wrong." No doubt.

Such happy episodes notwithstanding, politics is a low, mean business, and Tough Choosers are large-souled men, as they themselves readily volunteer. Both Tsongas and Rudman cry at least twice in their respective books. Rudman is a veteran of Korean combat, but when Souter was nominated "we went into my office and embraced and we both wept." And shortly after the announcement of Souter's famous pro-abortion decision in the *Casey* case, Rudman glimpsed Joe Biden amid a crowd of commuters in a railway station. The scene, as he describes it, sounds like a shampoo commercial filmed in hell: "We started running through the crowd toward each other, and when we met we embraced, laughing and crying."

Bradley, too, is given to such discomfiting confessions. He painfully describes his failed delivery of a keynote speech at the 1992 Democratic convention. His refrain was a lofty but not entirely understandable injunction borrowed from Langston Hughes: "Let America be America again! Let it be the dream it used to be!" It was drowned out by jeers from Jerry Brown delegates, and as Bradley delivered the line, over and over again, you could almost see it fall like the Hindenburg. To this day he confuses his theatrical failure with a larger failure of the press and public to prize his message. For Tough Choosers, the personal really is the political.

Is it any wonder, then, that men of such deep yearnings should sooner rather than later shrug off the tedium and unpleasantness of elective office? When a Tough Chooser retires, saying he fears the American people will never face the tough choices, he receives from editorial writers near-universal praise, along with their lamentations about a system that could not tolerate a man of such pure intent. Jim Lehrer invites him on the *NewsHour* for a solo interview, another irresistible perk. "To be perfectly frank about it," Rudman told Lehrer during his farewell debriefing in 1992, "I'm angry at the entire government and to some

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extent I am unhappy with the American people for accepting the simplistic answers politicians are giving them. . . . Frankly, Jim, I'm tired of it."

In his book, Bradley reduces their shared frustration to a kind of syllogism: "The times call for radical reform—in our economy, our politics, and our social interactions—and only government has the power to effect those reforms. To deny that fact is to be blind. Yet how to effectively use government eludes us."

Cynics may quibble. You could point out, for starters, that it isn't at all clear that "radical reform" is necessary. And even if it were, the government hasn't proved itself terribly good at such things, given its handling of, for example, the Cabrini-Green housing project. One shudders to think how all those government guys would rejigger the economy, not to mention our "social interactions." When they move from the general to the specific, from the moralizing to the politics, Tough Choosers often run into problems of coherence. If you listen closely, in fact, they can sound as incoherent—evasive, even—as the vote-grubbing politicians they have risen above.

The Tough Chooser scolds Democrats for shortsheeting economic growth. Then he scolds Republicans for their reluctance to raise taxes, which they oppose because taxes might hurt economic growth. A Tough Chooser favors deregulation but wants to increase federal regulation of business in the name of environmentalism. He deplores the past generation's slow rates of growth and praises the increasing governmental oversight that drags the economy down. He blasts Democrats for slighting entrepreneurship, while berating Republicans for wanting to cut taxes on entrepreneurs. And all this blasting, berating, and scolding is delivered in terms of the most unforgiving moralism.

It is a lovely world the Tough Chooser inhabits. For in it—the irony is delicious—he never has to face the tough choices! There are no trade-offs. In fact, there are no politics. There is only the scolding. He has left politics behind, to sit on corporate boards and cash checks in a law firm and corral concerned citizens into grassroots organizations. He will tell you that his dedication to public service burns like an unquenchable flame. But at last he is free of the "hard decisions," far from the committee hearings and droning colleagues, the Kiwanii and Girl Scouts. A Tough Chooser finds himself, by choice, removed from anything that might distract him from the contemplation of his own rectitude, and from his poetic and meaningless desire to let America be the dream it used to be. ♦

WITH FRIENDS LIKE DEES . . .

By Tucker Carlson

While the rest of the country watched in shock as the bodies of 169 people were carried from the rubble of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City last spring, Morris Dees was busy writing direct mail. Just two weeks after the bombing, Dees, famed director of the Southern Poverty Law Center, sent out thousands of letters to donors using the explosion as an example of the kind of atrocity his organization was working to prevent. Two weeks after his first mailing, Dees sent a follow-up letter, this one touting his new, and suddenly very timely, Militia Task Force.

"We must do all we can to help prevent more bombings and loss of life," he wrote in his pitch from headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. "These are extraordinary times that call for extraordinary commitment. Send the most generous renewal gift possible." Donors, Dees suggested, should send at least $150—"or more if you can."

Oklahoma City may have been the worst act of domestic terrorism in recent memory, but for Morris Dees it has been a marketing bonanza. In the year since the bombing, Dees has parlayed his opinions on militias and extremist groups into countless speeches and appearances on radio and television. Last month, HarperCollins released Dees's latest offering on the subject, a book called *Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat.* In its pages, Dees argues that, far from an aberration, Oklahoma City was the logical result of the growth of conservative politics in America. His proof? As he recently explained to public-radio host Diane Rehm, the issues that excite right-wing Republicans are the same issues that motivated alleged mass-murderer Timothy McVeigh: "Fear of immigrants; fear

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that the government has grown too large, over-regulates, over-taxes, is insensitive to people; fear of the English language not being the mother language of the country—in other words, multiculturalism; fear of giving gay people more rights; fear of the laws that allow abortions." According to Dees, politicians and pundits who whip up public fury over these issues—and here he points to George Bush, Jesse Helms, and Rush Limbaugh—share at least part of the blame when like-minded lunatics blow up public buildings.

The connections Dees appears to draw between Timothy McVeigh and a good portion of the Republican party may seem tenuous, even fantastic. But, artfully written, they can make a brilliant fund-raising pitch. And Dees, the man whom a former co-worker once described as "the civil rights movement's televangelist," loves nothing more than good ad copy. He's been writing it for years.

DEES BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A DIRECT-MAIL SOLICITOR WHILE STILL IN LAW SCHOOL, SELLING BIRTHDAY CAKES TO THE PARENTS OF CLASSMATES.

Dees began his career as a direct-mail solicitor while still in law school, selling birthday cakes to the parents of classmates. The business was an instant success, and Dees kept at it after graduation, branching out into product lines as varied as tractor cushions, holly wreaths, cookbooks, and rat poison. In 1969, while still in his early 30s, Dees sold his mail-order company to the Times Mirror media conglomerate for $6 million and retired to a sprawling estate he'd built outside of Montgomery called Rolling Hills Ranch. Three years later, however, Dees was back in direct mail, this time for George McGovern, who was then running for president.

As McGovern's finance director, Dees became famous for his emotionally written fund-raising letters. He eventually raised more than $8 million for the campaign, most of it from small donors. (In later years, Dees also acted as finance director for presidential candidates Jimmy Carter, Gary Hart, and Edward Kennedy.) When the campaign ended, Dees went back to Montgomery to run the Southern Poverty Law Center. In addition to his political experience, Dees returned with the McGovern campaign's list of 700,000 financial contributors, whose names he promptly used to establish his own donor base.

Founded by Dees and a partner in 1971, the Southern Poverty Law Center spent many of its early years filing lawsuits on behalf of criminals facing the death penalty. Racially charged though the cases were—many of them involved black prisoners who had murdered whites—Dees does not seem to have harbored many illusions about his clients. "Ninety-five percent of them are guilty as hell, no way around it," he told *Newsweek* in 1977. Nor was Dees himself free from controversy. In 1975, he was charged by a judge with felony witness-tampering and thrown off a case. Though the charges against him were later dropped without explanation, rumors of unscrupulous behavior continued to swirl around the young lawyer. Still, the Center grew quickly, thanks largely to a sophisticated and continuous direct-mail campaign that Dees directed.

In the early 1980s, finding it increasingly difficult to raise money for his anti-death-penalty work, Dees created Klanwatch, an organization dedicated to exposing the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and other racist organizations. Over the next decade, Dees made headlines by using a previously obscure legal principle called "vicarious liability" to bankrupt white-supremacist groups around the country. In a typical action brought in 1989, Dees and Klanwatch won a $12.5 million wrongful death suit in civil court against a race agitator and sometime television repairman from California named Tom Metzger. Dees claimed that Metzger and his group, White Aryan Resistance (WAR), were responsible for the murder of Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian immigrant beaten to death by skinheads in Oregon.

No evidence was ever produced that tied Metzger directly to the crime. Yet, using the same line of reasoning he would later employ to connect mainstream conservatives to the Oklahoma City bombing, Dees was able to convince a jury that Seraw's murder was "undertaken pursuant to the custom and practice of the defendant [Metzger and WAR] of pursuing its racist goals through violent means." Metzger was liable, in other words, because his destructive ideas had inspired others to commit destructive acts.

Odious as Metzger was, Dees's tactics didn't sit well with some civil libertarians. "Supremacy Verdict Hurts Civil Liberties," blared an editorial in the leftist magazine *In These Times*. But the Metzger case did win Dees fame. In 1991, NBC honored him with a television movie called *Line of Fire: The Morris Dees Story*. And of course, the publicity did nothing but good for Dees's fund-raising efforts back in Montgomery. By 1994, the Center was pulling in an average of $41,602 a day from donors, making it one of the most amply

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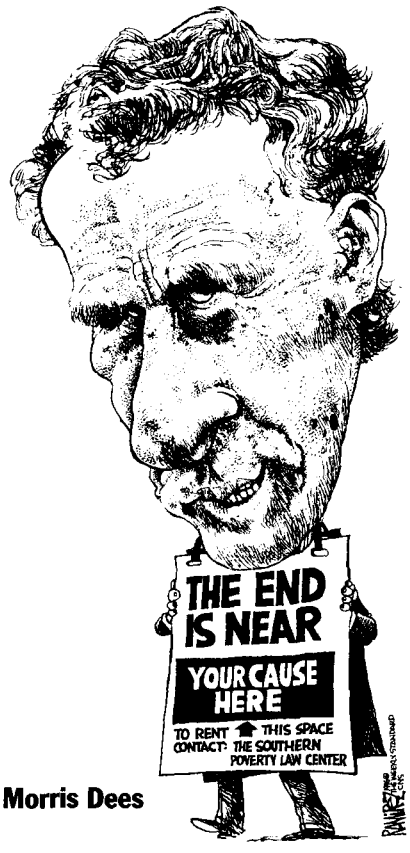
funded charities in the country. Today, Dees's organization has reserves that total close to $70 million, many times larger than those of better-known nonprofits like the Sierra Club, the ACLU, the NAACP, and Planned Parenthood.

If the Southern Poverty Law Center under Dees was growing rich, however, its clients—the impoverished black victims of racism featured in its mailings—were not. According to a series of articles published by the *Montgomery Advertiser*, although Dees and his organizations raised $62 million in contributions between 1984 and 1993, only about $21 million of those funds was spent on public programs. The rest went into investments, six-figure executive salaries, and the upkeep of the Center's lavish glass headquarters in downtown Montgomery. Meanwhile, Dees continued to send out fund-raising pitches, largely aimed at donors in distant northern cities, that described the Center as financially desperate.

In one particularly damning example of misleading advertising, *Advertiser* reporter Dan Morse found that Dees had been featuring a 1987 court case brought by the Center against the Klan in his mailings. To donors, Dees had implied that his client in the case, the mother of a murdered black man named Michael Donald, had received a $7 million judgment from the Klan thanks to the Center's efforts. As it turned out, however, the Klan had been nearly broke when it lost the case. Michael Donald's mother received less than $52,000.



Morris Dees

Michael Ramirez

Dees, on the other hand, reaped considerably larger benefits from the lawsuit. Long before the jury had even reached its verdict, Dees began sending out fund-raising letters that included graphic photos of Michael Donald's corpse. As in the McGovern campaign, emotional pleas met with impressive success. Between 1985 and 1987, the Center raised $9.7 million, partly on the strength of the Donald case. In the seven years following the case, the Center referred to the lawsuit in at least 11 different fund-raising pitches, over which time Dees and his associates raised nearly $48 million.

During the same period that Dees and his group were taking in millions for their work on behalf of oppressed minority groups, a number of black employees at the Southern Poverty Law Center were complaining about racial bias—including anti-black slurs—in their own office. Of the 13 black former staff members contacted by the *Advertiser*, 12 reported seeing or experiencing racism at the Center, often from Dees himself. Moreover, for an organization ostensibly dedicated to affirmative action in its strictest manifestations, the Center's upper management turned out to be surprisingly pale. In 1994, only one of the organization's eight department heads was black. She ran the mail room.

By the late-1980s, it was becoming clear that, as anything other than a nasty historical curiosity, the Ku Klux Klan was rapidly ceasing to exist. As early as 1986, Dees acknowledged this fact by announcing that the Center planned to change its focus from white- supremacist groups to other causes, particularly lawsuits against anti-abortion activists. (Perhaps not coincidentally, Dees had investments in at least one Montgomery abortion clinic, which was being run by his then-wife, Mary Farmer.) "We'll be out of this Klan stuff sooner or later," he told a reporter.

Much later, it turned out. Although Dees publicly admitted more than once that the Ku Klux Klan "doesn't really exist much" anymore, the Center in 1994 was still sending out fund-raising letters claiming "Your help is especially needed now" because of threats from the Klan. Accurate or not, such letters were among the Center's most reliable sources of income. As one of Dees's former staff attorneys explained to a reporter, "The market is still wide open for the product, which is black pain and white guilt."

It's not clear what Dees would have done for a living had the militia movement not appeared when it did. As it was, the clusters of armed paramilitary organizations that seemed to be popping up all over rural America provided Dees with a perfect threat with which to inflame the generosity of his donors. Before

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long, with his newly formed Militia Task Force, Dees became a national authority on the loosely bound collection of groups he called the "Patriot movement." In October 1994, Dees wrote Attorney General Janet Reno to warn her of the threat of militias. After the explosion in Oklahoma City, which he seemed to take as a sign of his own prophetic abilities, Dees took to soapboxes around the country to offer his diagnosis. "The Patriot movement," he wrote in materials sent to Reno, "is a potpourri of the American right, from members of the Christian Coalition to the Ku Klux Klan—people united by their hatred of the federal government."

This last point—that hating the federal government is, if not technically a criminal act, then dangerously close—forms the core of Dees's new philosophy. In a strange reversal, Dees, like much of the Left in the 1990s, now finds himself squarely on the side of the official establishment: the federal government, law-enforcement agencies, even the military. Dees's remarks at the National Press Club last month, for example, could have been cribbed directly from a law-and-order address by Spiro Agnew. As Dees explained it, "It's speakers who put our government down—whether it's on television, whether it's on radio talk shows, or whether it's a member of Congress or candidates who bash our government on a regular basis—that give these paranoid individuals who make up the dangerous element of the militia movement in America a belief that, well, these important people are saying this, it must be true. And it certainly gives them encouragement."

To combat this danger, Dees advocates the same kind of federal action—more FBI surveillance, fewer civil rights for political extremists—that liberals have spent much of the past 30 years worrying about. And Dees doesn't just advocate it; he lives it.

For an old-line liberal, Dees seems remarkably enamored of cloak-and-dagger affectations. According to a 1991 *People* magazine profile, Dees "has so many credit cards with fake names, he sometimes forgets who he is when checking into hotels or making airplane reservations." The long-time gun-control advocate also frequently carries a pistol in his waistband, protection, he says, from the racists who have tried on many occasions to kill him.

Perhaps more significantly, since the 1970s, the Southern Poverty Law Center has employed informants—"agents," as Dees calls them—to spy on right-wing organizations. At times, Klanwatch has even run its own witness-protection program. Dees won't elaborate on the specifics of his intelligence operation. "That's something we don't give out," he says cryptically. But he does allow that "we have a network of people. Some are our people, some are other people's people that are undercover. We've been doing it for 18 years, it's nothing new." According to Dees, many informants are recruited when marriages among white supremacists break up. "A girlfriend or wife falls out with her husband and we get this detailed letter about some plot to bomb something. Spouses fall out a lot, you know. There's nothing worse than a woman scorned," says Dees, who is currently on his fourth wife.

With all these secret agents, it is strange that Dees seems to have missed a good deal of the anti-government extremism that has taken place in America over the past two decades—namely, terrorist acts committed by the Left. In fact, Dees can't name a single one, or the group that committed it. "Since the Weathermen back in the Vietnam War days blew up a building at the Wisconsin University science building, that's the last such group I knew about," he says.

Clearly, he hasn't looked very hard. For during the 1980s—the same period, Dees says, when the government first began cracking down on the racist Right—federal agents were also engaged in a continuing battle with the militant Left, with groups whose plan of action was, if anything, more ambitious and more anti-government than anything the Klan ever attempted.

In 1987, for instance, the Justice Department charged a Marxist group called the United Freedom Front with "seditious conspiracy," a charge rarely invoked since the Civil War. According to the indictment, the group bombed at least two chemical plants, three oil-company buildings, two IBM offices, several military installations, and a courthouse, among a number of other targets. In addition, two members of the group, self-described "anti-imperialist revolutionary freedom fighters," murdered a New Jersey state trooper and fired on various other law-enforcement officers.

Nor was the United Freedom Front the only leftist group to target the government during the 1980s. Throughout the decade, in fact, it was organizations with names like Armed Resistance Unit, the Revolutionary Fighting Group, and the Puerto Rican nationalists of FALN that kept the FBI busiest on the domestic-terrorism front. On a single night in 1982, for example, leftist groups exploded bombs at four different government targets in New York City alone—police headquarters, the federal building, a city jail, and the U.S. district court in the Bronx. A year later, it was not the Christian Coalition but an outfit called Red Guerrilla Resistance Unit that bombed the U.S.

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Capitol building, blowing the doors off Sen. Robert Byrd's office in the process.

The prevalence of violence-prone groups on the Left, of course, doesn't make the Klan or racist militias any less menacing. But it does put some of what Morris Dees says into clearer perspective. Hating government and blowing up buildings is hardly the exclusive dominion of the Right, or of any other political element, though perhaps Dees can be forgiven for ignoring subtleties that might confuse potential donors. As Dees himself admits, "Fund-raising is hard work." ♦

THE DOLE NEXT TIME

By Matthew Rees

Senate majority leader Bob Dole isn't the only Republican running a campaign from the Senate floor. The race to succeed him as Senate Republican leader won't generate many headlines. The candidates don't admit to running, and the votes won't be tallied till December. Yet the outcome will heavily influence the post-election Republican agenda, and it will fall to the winner to marshal support for a President Dole—or to mobilize opposition to a reelected President Clinton.

Ever since Dole declared he would run for president, senators have been positioning themselves for the leadership contest. In the event of a Dole victory, the likely candidates are Trent Lott, Senate majority whip ("I fully intend to run for leader"); Don Nickles, chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee ("I have an interest in becoming majority leader"); and Thad Cochran, departing chairman of the Republican Conference ("I may be a candidate for leader"). If Dole loses, then declares he wants to remain Republican leader, neither Nickles nor Cochran will challenge him. Lott is a different story. He broke ranks in 1994 to challenge Sen. Alan Simpson for the whip's job, and Capitol Hill chatter has it that he's running for leader regardless of Dole's fate. "Up or out has always been my attitude," Lott said in November.

EVER SINCE DOLE DECLARED HE WOULD RUN FOR PRESIDENT, SENATORS HAVE BEEN POSITIONING THEMSELVES FOR THE LEADERSHIP CONTEST.

The maneuvering isn't limited to those seeking the top job. Cochran unleashed a flurry of activity in late April by announcing he wouldn't run for reelection as chairman of the Republican Conference, the number-three position in the GOP leadership. Sen. Connie Mack of Florida, who as conference secretary is one notch below Cochran in the party hierarchy, has all but locked up Cochran's job. And Sen. Paul Coverdell of Georgia is the favorite to succeed Mack, though also running is Sen. Conrad Burns of Montana.

Unlike the vice-presidential contest, the GOP leadership race won't receive much attention over the next six months, and the candidates' surrogates won't be trading public insults. Campaigning for the leadership is a one-on-one affair, with senators privately seeking their colleagues' support. Questions can be indirect—"I'm curious to know what you think my role ought to be in the leadership"—and endorsements vague. The secret ballot means senators sometimes promise their support to more than one candidate, so surprise outcomes are common.

If that should worry anyone, it's Lott, who at this early stage is favored over his closest competitor, Nickles. Lott holds the number-two position in the Senate, has been in Washington eight years longer than Nickles, has a reputation for political and legislative skill, and is a fixture on political talk shows. By comparison, Nickles has virtually no profile outside the Senate. In his 15 years there, six in the Republican leadership, his most lasting achievements—deregulating natural gas and requiring Congress to abide by the nation's laws—aren't exactly the stuff of legend.

Nickles shouldn't be underestimated, though. In his rise through Senate Republican ranks, he bested two better-known colleagues, Pete Domenici of New Mexico and John McCain of Arizona, for leadership positions. He was able to do this by planting one foot

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in the camp of the Old Bulls—veteran legislators who eschew confrontation and conflict—and the other in the camp of the more conservative and confrontational younger set. Though the senator is officially mum about his intentions, his political action committee has doled out $115,000, and he has campaigned for eight Senate Republican challengers.

Dole is Nickles's most prominent advocate. They have almost a father/son relationship; indeed, Nickles is the closest thing the Senate has to a Dole protégé. Nickles backed Dole early for president in 1988 and 1996 and supported him for majority leader in 1984. Their alliance is less a function of ideology than of style. Both had difficult upbringings. When Nickles was 13, his father killed himself, and inheritance taxes forced the sale of part of the family business—an episode that helped foster Nickles's deep religious convictions and his anti-government fervor. While Nickles was putting himself through college at Oklahoma State, he and his wife lived in a trailer and worked as janitors cleaning barber shops and a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Don Nickles

Kent Lemon

Nickles, like Dole, has spent most of his adult life in politics. He entered the Oklahoma Senate in 1979 when he was 29. Two years later Nickles became a U.S. senator—the youngest Republican ever to reach that height. He came to Washington on the coattails of Ronald Reagan and the New Right and has consistently pushed a conservative social agenda. He's been an outspoken opponent of abortion and led the fight against Joycelyn Elders, the Clinton administration's loquacious surgeon general, and Henry Foster, nominated to succeed her. Nickles has moderated some during his time in Washington, but he told the Dole campaign it was wrong to label Pat Buchanan an "extremist." And like Buchanan, Nickles doesn't shy from inserting religion into his political rhetoric.

Nickles's penchant for policy (he sponsored a popular alternative to the Clinton health-care plan) and Lott's penchant for publicity have prompted speculation the race will boil down to workhorse versus showhorse. This isn't credible. Lott has taken an active role on countless issues, most recently telecommunications. But there has been griping among Senate Republicans that he is too eager to sacrifice principle to bring home the bacon for Mississippi.

Even so, because Lott and Nickles share a solidly conservative ideology (both received a perfect score of 100 from the American Conservative Union in 1994), the contest will ultimately come down to style. Two issues—taxes and Bosnia—illustrate their differences. Lott is a cosponsor of legislation, masterminded by conservative activist Grover Norquist, that would require any tax increase to be approved by a two-thirds vote of Congress. But when Norquist sought Nickles's support last year, the senator told him the two-thirds rule "would make it too difficult to raise taxes."

This reluctance to challenge Senate procedure won't win Nickles many fans on the right, but senators appreciate his instinctive deference. When Dole announced he would not oppose the deployment to Bosnia but would support the troops, Nickles met with him privately to say he opposed the deployment, then labored with other opponents to craft an alternative resolution. By contrast, on the day former presidents George Bush and Gerald Ford announced their support for the Bosnia deployment, Lott publicly declared his opposition, then underscored it by appearing on the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*—all without first informing his boss, Dole.

But as much as some senators like Nickles's easygoing approach, it may be a drawback in a head-on race with Lott. "Nickles would not be an aggressive leader," warns conservative guru Paul Weyrich, who says the Oklahoman has gone from being a "cutting-edge conservative" to a "defender of moderate Republicans." That will hardly appeal to the 11 Senate Republicans who served in the House with Lott during his successful eight-year tenure as minority whip. Most, if not all, of this group would support Lott over Nickles. Meanwhile, Cochran is frustrated and fears the GOP is "on the way to becoming irrelevant." If this frustration persists, he's likely to run and to win support from the Old Bulls. Let the jockeying begin. ♦

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The RadWare: a Not-All-That-Modest Proposal

By David Gelernter

American culture is collapsing, and it is the Right's fault. The Left is out there fighting and we are not; the Left operates the institutions that deliver culture to the public. The *New York Times* and the Smithsonian take their cases to the people. We talk only to each other. If we had any guts and heart—and, come to think of it, we do—we would seize control of today's culture agenda instead of merely issuing lamentations from the sidelines.

Philip Terzian captured the ethos of the *New York Times* perfectly in his comments on the Sunday magazine's centennial issue (THE WEEKLY STANDARD, April 29). Gazing from Olympian heights over the last hundred years, the magazine discerns nothing worth mentioning about classical music or serious painting, or Yeats or Kafka or Orwell; but Joseph McCarthy, Janis Joplin, Jesse Jackson, and the usual bunch of feminists are too important to pass over. Yet there is more to the story. The *New York Times* is the only U.S. newspaper that covers the art world's daily business. If you care about art you have to read it.

Think of the difference between the *Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal*'s editorial page is ground zero of modern conservatism. It overwhelms the dim, officious *Times* editorials and op-ed pages, is taken more seriously, and wields far greater influence. So far as the *Journal*'s proud warriors are concerned, however, the fight stops at the edge of the editorial page. The *Journal* ought to play a role comparable to the role the *Times* now has a monopoly on—a role once played, with distinction, by the Sunday *New York Herald Tribune* before it folded in the mid-60s. If it were serious about conducting the culture war, the *Journal* would field art, book, and cultural coverage to challenge the hegemony of the *Times*. The *Times* dictates terms to the entire art community like the schoolyard bully because it is unopposed.

What's a person to do who cares about art but has no truck with politics or ideology? What's an apolitical art-loving lawyer in Passaic to do? Or a housewife in Westchester or a precocious high school student on Long Island? You read the *Times*, visit the museums, and get your art delicately seasoned with leftist cant. You have no choice.

Conservatives have a duty to change that, or at least to try. We have a duty to change our culture, and we have the strength to do it. Let me propose one way to start—an overreaching idea that is likely to be too expensive and lead nowhere. (Then again, you never know.) Today's educated public loves museums, and museums rank among our central cultural institutions. So, imagine a new type of museum. It would be a museum of history and art: They stand together because they define our nationhood for us and offer the best possibilities for cultural revival. It would be housed in a large, plain, four-story shoebox in some corner of Manhattan or (better yet) in a Manhattan suburb, accessible on foot from a train station for visitors from the city, with a big parking lot to accommodate suburbanites.

The new institution would aim to be the most exciting, original museum in the country; to be a place everyone wants to go, whatever his politics. Ideally, your apolitical lawyer, housewife, and high school student would have no idea what its politics are—just as they have no clear concept (to conservatives' impotent fury) of the *Times*'s or *Smithsonian*'s political slant. Our new museum would never stoop, however, to Smithsonian-style tendentiousness. Things would be different here, not because liberals would be banned but because conservatives would be welcome and these shows would be 100 percent cant-free.

Certain history exhibits at the Radical Warehouse Museum of History and Art would have an explicitly political goal: to aim over the heads of the art establishment and beam truth at the public. Not only the conventional museum-going public either. Conservatives today have no route into the schools; a museum is a way to reach schoolchildren, and their teachers also.

Its first show, "Witch Hunts Then and Now," would be unlikely to excite much interest among the staff at the Smithsonian. It would present McCarthyism side-by-side with the child-abuse scandals of the 80s and 90s—the McMartin trial, Kelly Michaels, the Amiraults, the ongoing Wenatchee hysteria. Most Americans have no concept of what McCarthyism was, other than an

David Gelernter, a writer and painter living in Connecticut, writes frequently about art for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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evil right-wing plot; they will be surprised to discover that, for all the damage done by the drunken senator from Wisconsin, our ongoing child-abuse witch hunts have been vastly more devastating to the victims. (Innocent people rot in jail as I write.) Scholars have an obligation to bring history to bear on today's world, and it is instructive to set these two tragedies side-by-side. Intellectuals of the 1950s, for example, were outraged by McCarthyism; most 1990s intellectuals have never heard of the Amiraults and couldn't care less.

The RadWare could corner the market on a new kind of show also, the "historical moment" exhibit that conveys something of the past to an American public increasingly cut off from history. Imagine "New York, September '45." You start in a room papered round with a life-sized photo-mural of Times Square on VJ day; you mingle with the crowd and look those Americans in the eye. You listen to the radio, walk into a classroom, browse a lunch counter and a candy store. The show is frank about the era's entrenched bigotries; tells also, calmly and concretely, about a city with good public schools, no street crime to speak of, strong public morals and morale, families whole—a world that most young people don't remotely suspect is even possible.

The goal of this sort of show is to be haunting—as haunting as the thin radio sound of the "Star-Spangled Banner" through the open window at a small train station in September '45 as you watch, in the distance, a steam engine thoughtfully chuff closer. In the yellowing newspapers stacked round the stove in the stationmaster's office the war in Europe is still on. It's early evening as you stand on the platform and "the skirts of the girls approaching," as E.B. White wrote about this time, "are ballooned by the breeze, and their bare shoulders catch the lamplight." That world is slipping away; we ought to touch that stronger, wiser country once more before it is gone forever.

Nostalgia has become a political act. That is why it is attacked so angrily on the left: Studying recent history convinces us that, for all the progress we have made in hugely important areas, we have slid backwards also—dramatically; catastrophically. People will accept this society the Left has made only so long as they can't imagine anything better. The America of half a century ago needed a utopian future. We need a utopian past.

Next, the Architecture Department. It would serve no ideological purpose; it would be there because there is no good architecture museum anywhere, and we could use one. (The RadWare will have to transcend politics to succeed.) Its goals would be to present architecture in new ways, advertise the civilizing effects of good urban landscapes, smash fashion, and scrape the deck clean of dried-up old ideas. Imagine a narrow gallery with crisp large black-and-white photos, mounted drawings, and rear-projection screens showing long, coherent sequences of color slides that take you slowly round the outside of a building or through a room inside. Forget those prim little models today's architecture galleries love; the RadWare's slide shows turn a screen into a "virtual display case" with the building itself slowly rotating inside. Computers will be useful here also. We create large displays out of stacked screens; a different building lives inside each display, and you navigate your way around with a joystick.

WHY DON'T MORE MUSEUMS MAKE THEIR VISUAL RICHES—THEIR CROWDS AND COLLECTIONS—VISIBLE FROM THE RESTAURANT?

The Architecture Department would show off neglected major talents (like James Gamble Rogers and Ely Jacques Kahn) and underappreciated geniuses (such as Luis Baragán). It might use its big computer displays to reconstruct lost landmarks: New York's Pennsylvania Station, the Trylon and Perisphere at the 1939 World's Fair, Grand Central Station before the Pan Am building settled like a raptor on top. The computer displays might help visitors, also, to evaluate proposed new developments—a rebuilt waterfront, a westside stadium, the Glowing Glitzball that is supposed to replace the strong, sad Hayden Planetarium.

The guiding principles of the RadWare's Art Department would fit (handily enough) onto T-shirts that you could buy at the museum shop. *Aesthetic Absolutism! Politics Out Of Art! Build High Culture*! And, the ultimate provocation, *Seek Beauty and Truth*! (A warning label will make it clear that if you venture into a college faculty lounge wearing this garment, the manufacturer absolutely doesn't know you.)

The Art Department would focus on today's art—on those contemporary artists, for example, whom you might call "aesthetic absolutists" as a group. One thing I can tell you about the "aesthetic absolutists" is that you have never heard of any of them. Another is that they are fed up with the stonecold emptiness of minimalism and conceptualism, and the naive political cartooning of the dominant Whitney-*Times* school. The antics of "installation artists" strike them as admissions of failure by

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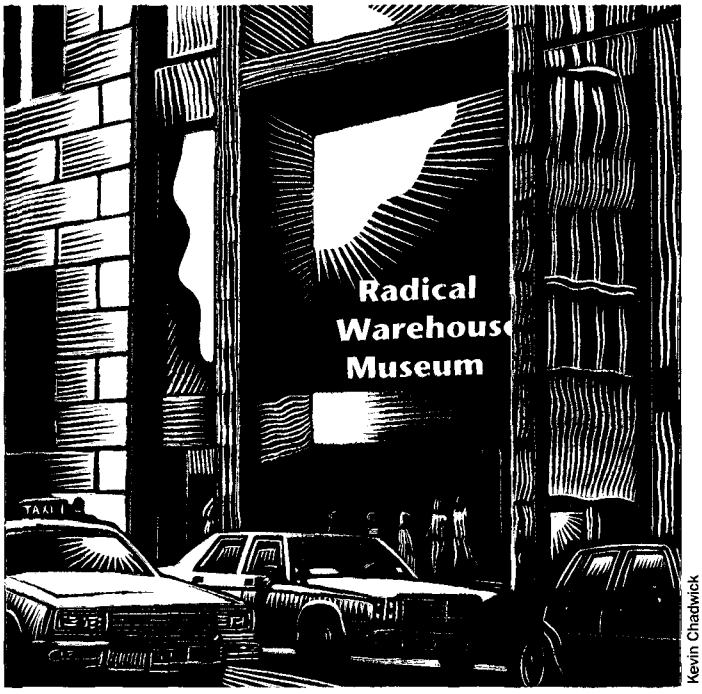
people who can't think up anything to paint, and whether an artist is male or female, black or white, straight or gay, Aleut or puffer fish is of no interest to any of them. They believe that the great unexplored territories of late-twentieth-century art are the human body and face. Their work is bold and aims high. Among today's prominent artists Lucian Freud comes closest to what they want, but that is none too close; they recognize his integrity and seriousness, but he is too narrow and too much of a sourpuss to suit them.

The contemporary art program calls also for exhibiting eminent modernists whose recent work deserves more attention than it has gotten (Jasper Johns, for instance) and painters who have never gotten their due because they are always out of step—Gabor Peterdi, for example, whose late *Wetlands* oils are masterpieces of the "abstract landscape" genre invented by Monet but are arguably better.

The look of its interior would be crucial to the RadWare's mission. It cannot be merely a museum; it must also be a think tank, where scholars are invited (or maybe dared is the word) to spend a year and plug their work into the public mood by designing a show or writing a catalog. Artists would occupy studios on-site, and the RadWare would exhibit their work fresh from the easel. And you would be able to see this master plan the moment you walked in. Round the edges of the big open interior would be a honeycomb of galleries on several levels, defined by partitions that were selectively broken down so that your gaze penetrates bunches of them at a time. Inside the perimeter just under the roof, offices and studios—visitors would notice the think tank whenever they looked up and the thinkers would see the public too, when they ventured onto the catwalks that connect their offices. Floating right at the center, midway up, the inevitable museum restaurant—wedding-cake-shaped, so that many layers of lunchers all have a clear view of the surrounding scene as they kibitz. The chance to eat and talk where the passing scene is intriguing has been a boon for millennia, so why don't more museums make their visual riches—their crowds and collections—available for remote viewing from the restaurant? Children can sit on the platform's edge and dangle their feet in culture; overhead, a big oculus to let the sun in. And speaking of the museum shop: The RadWare needs to help reestablish an art market for the middle class by selling cheap-but-good art and by commissioning it. Each RadWare show ought to be advertised in a first-rate artist's litho that you can buy at the shop.



Kevin Chadwick

Conservatives have no intention of abandoning our great cultural institutions. But too often they have acted as if politics is all that matters; have failed to create the new institutions we need if this country is to come around—as it will someday, and must. (Look at our response to the Pulitzer committee's failure to come up with an award for Dorothy Rabinowitz's work in the *Journal* exposing child-abuse witch hunts. Conservatives complained. What we ought to have done is declare the Pulitzer bankrupt and create a new award.)

On the picayune chance a RadWare ever comes to be, a single new museum can hardly turn American civilization rightside-up all by itself. Fireworks can't turn night into day—but they can change its character, make it a lot brighter, and cheer people up considerably.

The idea for a museum to challenge the current one-party orthodoxy in the arts by presenting something new, and tantalizing, and highbrow, and accessible, might seem quixotic. It need not be. Every now and then a Lee Bass arises with twenty-odd million to bolster the serious study of Western civilization. Every now and then a Steve Forbes pops up with twenty-odd million to spend and a desire to knock American culture on its ear. The RadWare quixotic? Not as quixotic as running for president. Are my plans flawed? Of course. But a flawed plan is at least a plan. ♦

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Music

Race Notes

By Jay Nordlinger

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has announced its 1996-1997 season, and in most respects it is an unremarkable one, offering the usual subscription series dedicated to "Pops," "Celebrity," "Favorites," and so on. But there is also a revolutionary series called "Classically Black." This is a group of concerts with nothing in common except that the soloists or guest conductors happen to be black. They are concerts that have been plucked from the rest and set aside. They have been—in a word—ghettoized.

The formula is uncomplicated: If a concert features a black musician—no matter what the salient characteristics of that concert—it is eligible for "Classically Black." For example, the orchestra will perform an all-Tchaikovsky program. Because the music is familiar and well-loved—the polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*, the first piano concerto, etc.—the concert is part of the "Favorites" series. But because the soloist in the concerto, Terrence Wilson, is black, the concert is part of "Classically Black" as well.

Or consider a gala concert titled "Great Opera Choruses," a "special event" and therefore not ordinarily part of any subscription series. But a singer has been booked to perform a couple of arias from *Carmen* between choruses. And because that singer is black—she is the mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson—the evening is designated "Classically Black."

The pianist André Watts will come to town, for a Rachmaninoff concerto. Watts is one of the most famous musicians in the world, so he is on the "Celebrity" series. But he is also the son of a Hungarian woman and a black American GI, so he beefs up "Classically Black," too. Watts is—in the crude lingo of a crude game—a "two-fer."

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra has its own "Classically Black" series, borrowed from the Baltimoreans, who pioneered it in 1990. Leading this series next season is a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. How did it get there? The symphony's last movement includes a large chorus and a vocal quartet, and in that quartet the mezzo-soprano (again, Marietta Simpson) and the tenor (Curtis Rayam) are black. The series brochure makes no mention of the soprano or bass, or of the conductor, who is the key performer in the work. This is possibly without precedent. Typically, members of the quartet are afterthoughts, certainly compared with the conductor. Here, though, it is color that counts. Terrence Wilson will make a St. Louis appearance, too, this time with the Grieg concerto. It need hardly be stated where that concert may be found.

THE FORMULA IS UNCOMPLICATED: IF A CONCERT FEATURES A BLACK MUSICIAN, IT IS ELIGIBLE FOR "CLASSICALLY BLACK"

If it seems simple, it is: You go by color. In days gone by, a program of Tchaikovsky war-horses would have been just that; it was the music that gave such a concert its distinctiveness. So too with an evening of opera excerpts. But today, race has wormed its way into the concert hall, as it has so many other domains, and a musician's color is widely regarded as a significant fact, capable of rendering a piece of music either "relevant" or "irrelevant." This is a startling departure for an art that is chiefly aural and spiritual—an art so divorced from the considerations of body that orchestras have long placed applicants for permanent positions behind screens, in "blind auditions."

Marietta Simpson reacts with astonishment when told that she is part of the two "Classically Black" series. For several moments, she is silent. "Amazing," she finally says. "Amazing. I was totally unaware of it. That's totally unbelievable. When my agent called, I was thinking that this was a series devoted to the music of African-American composers or something. . . . I think that's in pretty poor taste. I mean, I can't imagine that anybody would have to divide the concerts like that. I can understand the need to bring in a varied audience, but there are other ways to do it. To make it appear that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony . . ."

She continues, "I don't understand why it has to be categorized like that. If there were a Russian vocalist or pianist, would that concert qualify in an all-Russian series? If Russian singers were in the quartet for the Ninth, would Beethoven then be stuck in a Classically Russian series?"

She would, she says, prefer to be known as a singer, plain and simple. Yet "for me, it's not a matter of being known as anything. It's a matter of, I'm black, I'm proud of being black, and there's nothing I could do about it even if I weren't proud. It's going to be a way of dis-

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tinguishing me. But I don't get where that becomes my calling card. If I'm doing the Brahms Alto Rhapsody, I'm not sure how that gets on something called 'Classically Black.'"

She agrees that the successes of black musicians ought to be publicized, "but there are more subtle ways to do it. I don't think you have to put us on a billboard and say, 'These are the black people who are appearing, so I hope all you black people out there will come on out.' I find it offensive to say, 'These are the black ones, so this is "Classically Black."' I would like to think that all of us in this series are known as good musicians first and that this is why we were engaged."

About racial hiring in general, Simpson says, "It's a double-edged kind of thing. Racism has been so rampant, the idea has been to correct what has been wrong. I think that in the process you can go to the other extreme, but I think it needs to be dealt with."

She takes strong exception to the notion that the look of a musician on stage makes the music either "relevant" or not: "Who stands in front of the orchestra has nothing to do with it. On a personal level, I find [this division] really offensive. I am very happy about who I am, but to design a concert series after my race is offensive to me, because what happens when it's no longer P.C. to have a 'Classically Black' series? Does that mean you no longer have to hire black singers or instrumentalists? If you label us now because it's convenient, it might be convenient to remove the label—and the musicians with it—later on."

Terrence Wilson, for his part, is not so disapproving of the series, finding it to be, on balance, a "valid effort to reach out." "But I *am* cautious," he says. "I'm careful as to how many of these events I'm hired to participate in, because it labels me in a way that I don't want to be labeled as a musician. I don't want to get pigeonholed. I don't want to be 'Terrence Wilson, the African-American pianist'; I want to be 'Terrence Wilson, the pianist.'"

"See," he explains, "the elements that can help are the same elements that can be detrimental." If "Classically Black" is "just the first step to try to reach a vaster audience," Wilson is willing to tolerate it as a temporary measure. Nonetheless, "there is a failure to recognize that a performer is just a performer. . . . It all goes back to the misconception of classical music as being something European and the question of, 'Whose music is it?'

"IT ALL GOES BACK TO THE MISCONCEPTION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC AS BEING SOMETHING EUROPEAN. IT'S NOT ANYBODY'S MUSIC; IT'S JUST MUSIC."

It's not anybody's music; it's just music."

Wilson is well aware that his color is a desirable commodity in a society smitten by race: "I've realized all along that, given these conditions, in some cases race would be an important factor in getting hired. My way of dealing with that is to be cautious and recognize when that is the case." But how do you know? "You don't always know," he allows. "But the only thing you can do is . . . When presenters approach my manager with me in mind for some special event that has African-American this or that or the other on it, he will require that it be followed up by something that has nothing to do with it. When an orchestra keeps asking for Martin Luther King tribute concerts over and over, with no invitations for regular subscription series, then it becomes obvious." Wilson's first appearance with the Baltimore Symphony was, indeed, for a Martin Luther King concert. He accepted on the condition that the orchestra provide him with three other dates in the bargain.

The pianist looks forward to a time when skin color no longer touches the musical realm. He recalls, "People would say to me when I was growing up, 'You're going to be the next André Watts.' This came from both African Americans and Caucasians. They never said, 'You're going to be the next Richard Goode or Radu Lupu or Vladimir Horowitz or Artur Rubinstein or Martha Argerich—those were my musical heroes."

The orchestras' intentions are several: corrective, expiatory, commercial, and psychological. Most would contend that they are also benign. Miryam Yardumian, the music administrator in Baltimore, chooses her words carefully: "We are always looking for African-American artists at the highest level and we are always trying to attract African Americans to our concert audience." Demography is of prime concern: "If we had a large Asian or Russian population, we would want to do things to attract that audience, too."

Lee Anna Good, director of public relations for the St. Louis Symphony, reports that some St. Louisians had qualms about "Classically Black" but were reassured by the lack of backlash in Baltimore. "Relevancy to your life," she says, "is a good way to enter the concert-going experience. We've been told numerous times by the black community, 'Why should I go to a concert when the people on stage have nothing to do with me, when they don't have my life experience?'"

Is the premise, then, that black

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people would rather hear music performed by black musicians than by others? That music cannot be "relevant" to black hearers unless the music-makers share their pigmentation? Yardumian answers, "It makes it perhaps more interesting, more of an inducement." Good says much the same: "It probably shouldn't matter, but if it's a way to get them in in the beginning, then it can make the music more relevant to them."

Prickly and unavoidable is the question of hiring: Did the Baltimore Symphony set out to hire black soloists and guest conductors for "Classically Black," or did it book the season in an undiscriminating fashion and then simply deposit concerts involving black musicians into the series? "There was probably some of both," Yardumian responds. Asked to confirm that race is a factor in the engagement of musicians in Baltimore, she pauses: "It is not a factor," she says; "it is a consideration."

And has St. Louis made special efforts to feature black musicians? "Yeah," says Lee Anna Good, "probably. I guess you could classify it that way. It's something we're conscious of, in the backs of our minds."

They, like other orchestra officials, seem torn about whether race should play a role in musical life. In one breath, Yardumian lauds the meritocratic imperative: "Music is the most important thing. If you have other goals, unfortunately things go awry." But in the next, she cannot keep from insisting, in acknowledgment of a remedial purpose, "It's going to take generations to undo all of the wrongs that have been done. It's going to take generations."

Thus do today's orchestra officials sound much like their counterparts in the universities. The buzzwords that trip most frequently from their lips are "relevance," "outreach," and, that pet, "diversity." An orchestra is now likely to have an "outreach committee," part of whose function seems to be to exert pressure on music administrators to make race-conscious, rather than strictly musical, choices. (It was from such a committee that the idea of "Classically Black" came in Baltimore.) The administrators seem not to mind—either because race-consciousness comes naturally to them or because they perceive a financial advantage in it.

The new spirit was nicely expressed in 1993 by James Wolfensohn, then the chairman of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and now the president of the World Bank: "You've got to make orchestras more relevant to the broad level of the community. A wholly white middle-class orchestra doesn't appeal to a large segment of the country. We don't want to watch white players and white audiences—it's a matter of morality and economics."

The issue of race intruded on the music world in a big way in 1989. The venue, appropriately, was Detroit, than which no city is more race-obsessed and race-driven. Two state legislators threatened to block $2.5 million in funds for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra unless it breached its policy of blind auditions and hired a black musician. They also threatened a boycott.

The orchestra's management convened an emergency meeting and quickly capitulated. Within days, it hired a black bassist without benefit of competition, blind or otherwise. The executive director at the time braved it out in a press release: "We took this unique initiative to demonstrate our strong commitment to our affirmative action goals." She subsequently told the press, "The Detroit Symphony was in a weakened financial situation. If we had not hired a black musician, it would have meant immediate bankruptcy." Said the bassist, in a telling instance of post-affirmative-action *tristesse*, "I would rather have auditioned like everybody else." But he accepted anyway.

From that moment, the Detroit Symphony moved vigorously on the racial front. It began by changing its audition policy. The screen is still up, but auditions may not be held unless there are black musicians in the pool. The orchestra also established what it calls "African-American fellowships." Says executive director Mark Volpe, "The rationale is to identify young African-American musicians right out of school [and] hire them to play a number of weeks. They're paid union wages, the same compensation as the permanent members, and the weeks they're not playing, they have coaching, including mock auditions." The orchestra also pays for the fellows to travel to other cities to audition for other orchestras. Volpe avows that there is no discomfort among symphony officials that these ministrations aid only a certain group of musicians, based on race, and no one else.

The zero-sum aspect of such practices is unlamented. On the contrary: Volpe is forthright and confident in defense of race-conscious policy. "We want to be sensitive to the community," he says. "A positive irony is that [one of the threatening legislators] has become one of our greatest supporters." How so? "With appropriations and things like that." Moreover, "some of the earlier criticism was legitimate. The orchestra was paying lip-service to the need for more diversity, in terms of people on stage, and really hadn't created the programs to do anything other than talk the game."

But should an orchestra have a social mission? Is it not sufficient

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to offer great music performed by the finest musicians available? This notion is treated as quaint, a luxury from a former day, no longer applicable in an age of racial hardball and scrambling for arts funding. "It's not enough to play Mozart and Brahms," Volpe says. "With the kind of money we expect, we have to be an educational institution. We have to be proactive in terms of educational programming and, again, serve a mission that's broader than just playing Brahms."

The fact remains that the Detroit Symphony was bullied, and the Atlanta Symphony has been, too: In 1991, it lost $70,000 from the city's Bureau of Cultural Affairs because it was judged "weak" in the "cultural diversity" of its programming, personnel, and audiences. One blinks to remember that a symphony's "outreach" once consisted of tacking a poster to a wall, or placing a notice in the newspaper, informing people that a concert was in the offing and inviting them to attend.

It may be naive to maintain that music should be immune to the race-fever that afflicts contemporary America. But if affirmative action is allowed to gain further ground in music, the following disaster might result: If one noticed a black soloist (for example) on a program—especially if that soloist were young and unknown—one might assume that the soloist had been hired for race, and not ability. One might be wrong, of course. But it would not be an unreasonable assumption, nor would it be hateful. (Indeed, the reverse used to be true: If a black soloist appeared on a program, one could assume that the soloist was especially meritorious, given the racial barriers that had to be overcome.) As a black trombonist in the Atlanta Symphony put it at the time of the Detroit controversy, "It doesn't do any good for players' self-esteem if they feel the rules were bent for them."

That racial separatism should come to music is tragic. The only black and white of it ought to be the notes on the page, or the keys of a piano. The choral movement of that Beethoven symphony—the one on St. Louis's "Classically Black" series—uses a famous ode by Schiller, regarded as a kind of anthem for music. Its universal message does not expire: "Let thy magic bring together/All whom earth-born laws divide;/All mankind shall be as brothers/'neath thy tender wings and wide." And later: "Love toward countless millions swelling,/Wafts one kiss to all the world." ♦

Books

Farms Without Hope

By Richard Starr

The farmer aims to make his mark on the land. He in turn is marked by that effort, quite literally. My earliest childhood memories of my father are of the physical toll that farming takes on a body. His thumbnails, for instance, always seemed to be deep purple—badly aimed swings of a hammer will do that. And his upper back was polka-dotted where the sun tanned it through the holes in his shirt.

When I was a teenager working alongside him, my own appearance must have been similarly striking. In 1978, at the tail end of the worst winter of the century, my hands turned black. To keep water thawed for the hogs to drink, we burned small kerosene heaters under the tanks. Once or twice a day, I would have to knock the accumulated soot off a dozen or so heaters, refill them with fuel, and trim the felt wicks with a pocketknife. You could do all this with gloves on, but it took twice as long. The kerosene dissolved the soot, and the oily black worked its way so far into the pores that I don't think my palms turned fully pink again till summer.

Nancy French/The Free Press

Victor Davis Hanson

The sheer physicality of the family farm—the pig stink and the locust-tree perfume, the skin-frying heat and the eyelash-freezing cold, the sound of barbed wire ripping denim just before it rips the skin—came back to me reading Victor Davis Hanson's *Fields Without Dreams: Defending the Agrarian Idea* (Free Press, 289 pages, $23.00). The dust-jacket photo of Hanson—a farmer by birth and temperament, and now accidentally a professor of Greek at California State University in Fresno—shows that he, too, has been marked by life on the land. If you look closely, it tells much of the story of his book.

Hanson is standing in front of a barn, the unlikeliest classicist you

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have ever seen. The camera has caught him on a bad hair day, but that's the least of it. His shirttail is out, and you can see he's wiped his hands on it. The workboots are not laced all the way to the top. His filthy trousers are tucked halfway into one of them. He is ever so slightly leaning back on his heels. Like the barn behind him with its patched, corrugated-tin roof and unpainted siding, he looks weather-beaten. And he is.

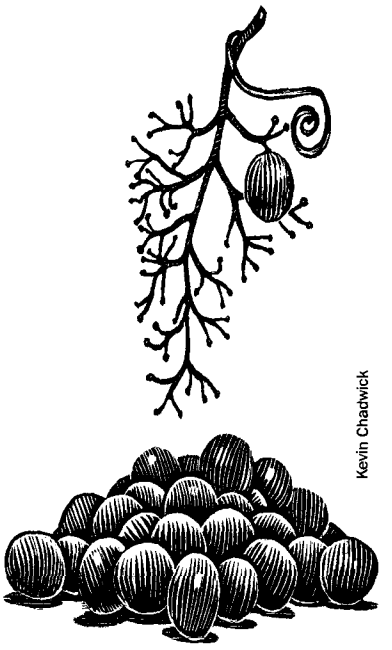
But not just the weather has beaten Hanson. So have depressed commodity prices; disastrous planting decisions; crookedness at the local cooperative that marketed his crops; and the flagging demand for raisins, the mainstay of the San Joaquin Valley farm Hanson once ran full-time with his brothers and cousin.

This is not, then, the book of a dilettante professor who farmed as a hobby. Hanson was the real thing, a fifth-generation California viticulturist. He was also, as it happens, trained in the classics. As a result, when the agricultural depression of the 1980s deprived him of his livelihood of choice, he returned reluctantly to the university and has since become a noted historian of ancient Greece, if still no ordinary academic. To wit:

> Last year I built a stone-block wall all around the house and yard, a 550-foot circuit, 6 feet tall, 3,000 feet of steel re-bar, 50 cubic yards of concrete foundation, more a fortress really than a mere enclosure. No bank, no hoodlum, no broker will make it inside that wall. They may, like the Spartans in Attica, ravage the countryside outside the circuit, battle with family skirmishers on patrol, but the house itself will be safe. Knowledge of the principles of classical fortification and siegecraft (poliorcetics) and ancient Greek masonry is not entirely without use.

This will doubtless go down like a spoonful of ipecac with his university colleagues. Likewise, this pungent passage about the yeoman agrarians Hanson reveres:

> You more urbane readers, I imagine that you would not want any of these family farming holdouts at a university lecture, a golf outing, or a group therapy session, much less on a weekend retreat or conference panel. . . . You see, as Theophrastus knew, the tanned crack in their behinds too often peeps out from their sinking Levis. . . . They track mud on your linoleum and leave dirt on your sofa. By them the young, sensitive homosexual who grew up across the road is dubbed "the boy who went queer up in the Bay Area"; the wealthy Armenian raisin packing elite are reduced to "the long-nosed thieves"; the grape picker on permanent disability with the fused back is greeted with "always siesta, huh, amigo?"; the industrious but undercapitalized farmer without inheritance is cruelly dismissed as "the know-nothing about to go belly up."



Kevin Chadwick

For the sake of his wife and children, I hope Hanson has tenure.

Fields Without Dreams, it must be said, is an unrelievedly pessimistic book. Hanson tells in unsparing and fascinating detail of the collapse and near-bankruptcy of his family's farm. He looks back in sorrow and in anger. If the farm laborer and family farmer are by his lights inherently noble creatures, all others, especially those who earned a living while he was failing, are ignoble.

The vocabulary of abuse is stunning. Only the farmer earns his daily bread. Everyone else in America is just after "lucre" and "pelf" (even his mother's earnings as a jurist he describes as "lucre that accrued from the law"). "Mush-mouths in white shirts" are "covetous and rapacious." A stockbroker is a "high-salaried parasite." And what of the professors who see the American farm as "the criminal spawning ground of homophobia, sexism, racism, and capitalism"? Hanson wonders what historians of the future will make of this "curious late twentieth-century species, this whiny lamprey who slithers amid the swamp of American materialism only to turn back out of the muck to stick his tiny fangs into his bloated mother, now pouty over all the ingested pabulum that has made him fat but colicky."

The first third of the book is a sustained act of aggression in this vein, with Hanson dropping hints that he is striking a rhetorical pose ("The sophisticated and discerning reader finds the yeoman's simplistic distrust of brokers and merchandisers pathetic, his mind surely paranoid if not unstrung as well"). But Hanson's prevailing aggression is against himself: He feels a deep sense of shame at having failed where his ancestors gritted their teeth and survived. He loathes all the non-agrarians in his midst, and is now one of them.

He has a larger, less solipsistic purpose. Hanson wishes to resuscitate the voice of the Greek poet Hesiod, whose *Works and Days* was a "melancholy" and "angry account of the necessary pain and sacrifice needed to survive on the land." He wishes to do this not simply as a corrective to the romanticism of Virgil, whose *Georgics* lauded "the harmony and community of the countryside" and who has proved a durable and saccharine influence

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on American memoirs of the farming life.

Like the older Greek poet, Hanson thinks there is a recognizable agrarian type, found in "families whose sole support, whose only occupation, is growing food." This yeoman is not always pleasant or couth, it is true, but he is necessary to a healthy democracy. In his struggle to master nature he masters himself, and his leavening presence in the polis "creates a stability that leads to affluence and greater freedom."

Hanson is convinced that the sturdy yeoman agrarian is an endangered, if not quite extinct, species in late twentieth-century America. He is further convinced that extinction is inevitable, that his own failure to make a go of it is the future of American agriculture writ small. Farming will go on, on a much smaller scale than the family farm with hobbyists, and on a much larger scale with vertically integrated agribusiness. But a crucial type of citizen will disappear, with dire political consequences foretold in the fourth century B.C.:

> Once that Greek system of autonomous city-states based on agrarian notions of small farming, constitutional government, and infantry militias vanished, classical Greek culture was lost. Literature became stylized and repetitive. Taxation and military expenditure soared. Authoritarianism replaced popular government. Without the agrarian infrastructure there was no middle to frame, support, and mend an egalitarian society. All that is a historical fact, not a romance, not an agrarian yarn.

The book's larger argument is obviously self-serving, though that doesn't mean it is wrong. As one of millions who have turned their backs on the self-denying struggle to scratch a living from the soil, I suppose it is equally self-serving on my part to see the demise of a certain style of agriculture as of no special consequence for the fate of the republic.

Still, I am simply not as convinced as Hanson that agriculture on a large scale—it is a continental country after all—precludes the fostering of the yeoman's virtues. Many "agribusinesses" are family farms in disguise, taking on a corporate form as the only sane response to the fractured ownership that stems from the demise of old-fashioned primogeniture. And Hanson's grasp of economics is suspect at times: "True, there exist real laws of supply and demand in farming," he writes, a concession on the order of admitting that, after all, gravity does make fruit fall from the tree. Most government agricultural subsidies raise the price for consumers, not lower them, as Hanson seems to believe. Finally, I am not so sure that the stern virtues Hanson prizes are exclusively concentrated in so small a portion of the population, or that the decline of family farming presages the fading of these virtues, rather than the other way around.

But these are demurrers about a vivid work that on the whole is more honest about people who live on the land than any of recent vintage. *Fields Without Dreams* is a deadly serious book, but it is enormously entertaining as well.

If indeed a hardy race of agrarians is vanishing, Hanson has drawn the portrait of them that deserves to survive. It honors them in just proportion to their merits, which are considerable. Victor Davis Hanson, let it be said, though no longer an agrarian through and through, is still a citizen of great stature. ♦

Books

MICHAEL SANDEL'S AMERICA

By Clifford Orwin

Michael J. Sandel tackles the widely shared dissatisfaction with contemporary America from a "communitarian" perspective in his newly published *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 417 pages, $24.95).

While communitarians like Sandel lean leftward, they differ from earlier leftists in stressing political concerns rather than economic and social ones. They eschew cosmopolitanism and extol "participation" and seek to empower local communities at the expense of big business and big government both.

There was, Sandel says, a national consensus in favor of republican self-government in days gone by. American leaders in earlier times recognized that public policy should seek to foster the virtues required for republican self-government. Whether Federalist or Anti-Federalist, Jeffersonian or Jacksonian, Whig or Republican, they all recognized that citizenship mattered, and that in every realm of public concern the only good policy was a *republican* policy. But early in our century, he says, America's opinion leaders began singing in a different choir—with private life increasingly taking precedence over public virtue, and individualism over communitarianism.

Clifford Orwin is professor of political science at the University of Toronto and the author of The Humanity of Thucydides *(Princeton University Press).*

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The result, he says, has been the steady erosion of citizenship as an object of public policy due to the influence of an ideology he calls "procedural liberalism." The "interventionist" branch of procedural liberalism believes that, to empower the individual, the role of government must be expanded. The "libertarian" branch believes government must be reduced to achieve the same end. But procedural liberalism has no public goal beyond the maximization of private opportunity. John Rawls and Lyndon Johnson, on the one hand, and Milton Friedman and Barry Goldwater, on the other, have agreed in limiting the task of government to securing and enhancing the right of the individual to pursue his "values"—whatever these "values" might be.

Sandel paints his historical account in broad strokes, but it does provide an effective backdrop for his critique of current tendencies. Dwelling on judicial decisions and on the formation of economic and regulatory policies, he shows how, from the Progressive era onward, private welfare has steadily usurped citizenship as the object of public action. Sandel brilliantly expounds the bankruptcy of this new "procedural republic." On matters ranging from religious liberty and freedom of speech to privacy rights and family law, he shows that many of our reigning public dogmas flout not only common sense but the conditions of healthy republicanism.

He demonstrates that professed judicial "neutrality" among human "values" has proved anything but neutral in practice, as in this description of contemporary divorce law: "By making of dependence a dangerous thing," he writes, this law "burdens the practice of marriage as a community in the constitutive sense. By bracketing moral judgments, celebrating self-sufficiency, and loosening the relation between the self and its roles, the law is not neutral among competing visions of married life, but recasts the institution of marriage in the image of the unencumbered self." Procedural liberalism, then, typecasts us as "unencumbered selves," free agents for whom freedom of agency is the ultimate publicly recognizable good. And so, deprived of a meaningful public life and thrown back on our individuality, we are to congratulate ourselves that the state keeps out of our bedrooms and that some anonymous agency out there protects our interests as consumers.

IF THE EARTH WERE TO OPEN TO SWALLOW EVERY WAL-MART, WHOM WOULD THAT BENEFIT EXCEPT K-MART?

Like many social critics, Sandel is more persuasive in describing problems than in solving them. He devotes only 10 pages to solutions; these include community development corporations, sprawlbusting (opposition to the proliferation of Wal-Marts and their ilk), a new urbanism, and community organizing. But it is hard to imagine that such measures will change the way many of us live now: overworked, overstressed, economically pressed, without deep roots in the places where we live or the leisure and energy for local citizenship. Sandel's proposals have already been tried, and could doubtless be tried harder, but if the earth were to open to swallow every Wal-Mart, whom would that benefit except K-Mart? Consumers have made it clear they would rather pay $8.49 to Ace Hardware than $300 for the same wrench at whatever family-owned store the Pentagon shops at. By demanding competitive prices the public also supports free trade, downsizing, and ever greater economies of scale. Here as elsewhere Sandel's remedies resemble whistling in the dark, brave and earnest but not likely efficacious.

On the level of national politics, Sandel agrees with many conservatives in favoring a "New Federalism." But is he willing to pay the price, namely less fiscal dependence on the federal government? This seems doubtful, given his emphatic support for greater income redistribution, which he considers necessary "less for the sake of distributive justice than for the sake of . . . forming the civic identity of rich and poor alike." Sandel sees the welfare state and a renewal of public spiritedness as mutually reinforcing: Only a heightened sense of civic solidarity will sustain our willingness to pay higher taxes to underwrite civic equality, which is in turn a condition of true communal self-government.

It is hard, however, to reconcile this call for more redistribution with the idea that we need to be more self-governing. However hard Sandel squeezes the republican tradition, he'll find no encouragement to expect civic virtue from the economically dependent. He trusts too much in the power of rhetoric. Rechristen welfare as "civic identity payments" and you still won't find the underclass so dumb as to believe that they're standing on their own two feet. Sandel has it right the first time, when he recommends community development as the proper approach to the problems of the poor—an approach incompatible with their continued reliance on a dole from above.

These are not the only difficulties with the book. Sandel's analysis of "procedural liberalism," while forceful, is also curiously one-sided. For lately this liberalism

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has wreaked a great deal of mischief precisely by deferring to "community." "Communities"—the African American, the gay and lesbian, the Hispanic, etc., etc.—are all the rage among liberals today. Sandel's critique of the "abstract individual" is not the jeremiad of a voice crying in the desert but the conventional wisdom. Politically, however, it has sparked anything but a resurgence of republicanism. Rather it has helped judges and bureaucracies break new ground in encroaching on civil society as well as on the political process. It has encouraged not renewed autonomy (individual or communal) but "victimology" and the culture of complaint.

Consider the policies that go by the names of affirmative action and multiculturalism. These enshrine Sandel's premise that we are not primarily individuals but members of communities—and that we are to be publicly catalogued and treated as such. It is on the premise that we are defined by our communities that loyalty to our communities overrides any broader patriotism. It is on that premise that there is no such thing as science or history simply, only black, white, or female science and history; no such thing as reason simply, only black, white, or female reason.

Here, the politics of membership prevails over the politics of individualism. This form of communitarianism has proved every bit as corrosive of the bond of common citizenship as the individualism Sandel dislikes.

Sandel sees clearly that America faces a moral crisis. In his critique of the "procedural republic" he even hints at the root of that crisis: the relativism that reduces human life to the strife of arbitrary values, with the state playing neutral arbiter. It is not, however, merely state action or inaction derived from this relativism but the doctrine of relativism *itself* that has subverted our communal institutions. Nor, as Sandel implies, does this relativism lead only to an excess of individualism. In its assault on the notion of a common human reason, it encourages an intransigent assertion of communal rights. Sandel seems to suggest that the "value" of community itself can help to resolve our present crisis. But this is to put the cart before the horse. Even if you call it "republicanism," community cannot serve as a moral principle; rather our moral principles must furnish the basis of our community.

Michael Sandel

Kevin Chadwick

Sandel does us a favor by reminding us that America was originally republican as well as liberal, so let us repay him by reminding him that it has always been liberal as well as republican. As Woodrow Wilson once put it, "our Constitution has thrown [the individual] upon his own resources, as if it honored him enough to release him from leading strings and trust him to seek his own rights." Its premise is that "no man must look to have the government take care of him, but that every man must take care of himself." Such a system, Wilson continued, "elicits intelligence and creates independence of spirit."

So yes, Americans have always aspired to constitute a community, but a community of free, self-reliant individuals. While cherishing their country, their families, their churches, their associations of every sort, they are not submerged in them or defined by them.

Sandel's "encumbered self" is not actually an American ideal but an import, straight out of Martin Heidegger. Because he does not acknowledge that our republicanism was from its genesis in the Declaration of Independence an individualist republicanism, he does not explore the crucial question of the proper interaction of the two components. The response to Sandel's powerful call for the revival of American republicanism at its best is that such a revival depends on a renewal of American individualism at its best. Not until we are again willing to take responsibility for ourselves as individuals will we be fit to assume responsibility as a community. ♦

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"Dole Says He Has Plan to Win Votes of Women"
—*headline in the* New York Times, *May 8, 1996*

Parody

DICK MORRIS & ASSOCIATES

"If you want to win — let us do the spin"

MEMO TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DICK MORRIS

RE: OUR OWN GENDER GAP PLAN

In our meeting this morning you asked: "The paper said Dole has a plan to win the votes of [women]. Where's our plan to win the men's vote?"

As usual, Mr. President, you have isolated a crucial variable. Dole's problem with women voters mirrors our own problem with men. In a recent focus group, 15 likely male voters were asked to choose one word to describe the President. One respondent volunteered "untruthful," two others volunteered "indecisive," and twelve volunteered to "kick his lard-butt back to the Ozarks."

To address this problem, we've scheduled next week as Men's Week, with several issue-specific events demonstrating that 1) the President enjoys precisely the same activities as average American males and 2) at any given moment he shares their concerns, whatever those may be (Stan Greenberg will be giving us data in real time).

Monday: Photo op at Biff's Truck Stop, Bark Peel, Va. You'll eat a scrapple-and-head-cheese sandwich on white toast and purchase a cap in the gift shop. Cap reads: "If you knew my wife you'd know why I drink." (Mrs. Clinton has OK'd.)

Tuesday: Attend World Wrestling Federation championship match between Randy "The Hit Man" Savage and The Blonde Avenger.(Freeh at FBI assures us Savage isn't really a "hit man.") You will root for Savage. He'll win.

Wednesday: Participation in Sixth Annual Dwarf Toss at Hooters, Landover, Md. This could be controversial, but Stephanopoulos will spin the press. You will be tossing George.

Thursday: We have rented out the entire "Fair Lanes" facility in Bowie, Md. You will bowl alone. (Photo op and brief remarks.)

Friday: Oval Office visit with Men's Movement poet Robert Bly. Suggested talking points: your weight problem, his weight problem, your common experiences as Adult Children of Alcoholics. I think it's advisable that you be overcome with uncontrollable emotion at this event, but Ickes disagrees. We'll work up a decision memo ASAP.

Saturday: You'll watch football all day (or baseball—Greenberg is looking into which sport is big at the moment). You'll get hammered on Schlitz. Attorney General Reno says she can show you how to crush cans on your forehead. Might be a nice photo op—your call.

Sunday: Rest up! Next week is Declining Wages Week. You may have to work overtime.

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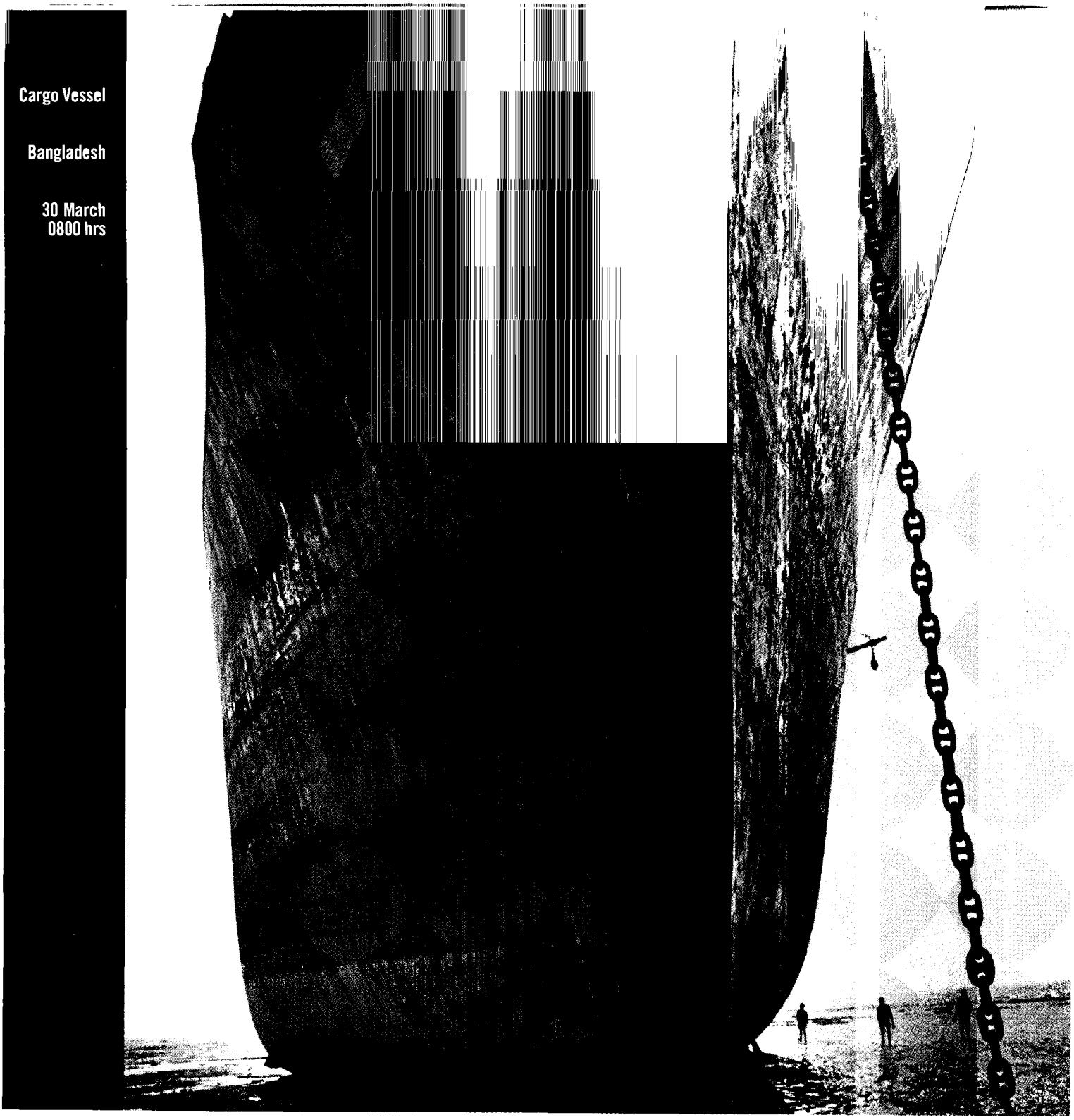

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